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THE NEW

STATESMAN AND NATION

OCT 7 1940

The Week-end Review

Vol. XX. No. 499 [Incorporating THE ATHENÆUM] SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 14, 1940 [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] SIXPENCE

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"A VERY IMPORTANT WEEK"

THE fantastic climax seems to have arrived. Flat-bottomed barges and merchant ships are creeping round from German and Dutch ports to prepared harbours in the north of France; large numbers of German troops stand ready to sail. No doubt there are also air liners waiting to drop men on to our countryside. No detail, no surprise will be overlooked. We may expect Germans in British battle-dress; we must be ready for parachutists and possibly for gas. If the invasion comes, which seems, as Mr. Churchill suggested, probable, but not at all certain, it will be accompanied by more intense raids on docks and shipping, and on aerodromes and communications of all sorts. Efforts will be made to drive civilians on to the roads.

If this invasion is attempted, it will be met with a far more efficient resistance than seemed possible immediately after the collapse of France. The Home Guard has become a formidable army; the regular troops are now practised and fully equipped; the coast is guarded with heavy guns; the navy still controls the sea; the civilian population is becoming accustomed to bombing and the R.A.F. has reason to regard itself as superior in everything but numbers to the enemy that it has to meet. Indeed, because Göring has not achieved aerial supremacy, the invasion may very possibly be again postponed until the week, which Mr. Churchill describes, with eloquent understatement, as "very important, even in our history," has passed and winter and bad weather make a landing more difficult. But the preparations are there and the danger imminent; we are glad to see that the authorities, while attempting to satisfy sections of opinion which seek salvation in our reprisals on Berlin, are carefully explaining that to bomb Berlin is no protection against invasion. Indeed, the wholesale bombing of London may have as one of its objects the diversion of our attention from the real source of attack.

The intensified air attacks on London would indeed be far larger if their only object was to terrorise civilians. No doubt the destruction of morale is one aim, but the lowering of production through loss of sleep and loss of time is more important and the dislocation of communications and, above all, the destruction of the docks, are even more significant objectives. So far the main result has been to convince the mass of people that they are indeed "in this war" whatever they think of the past policies of Governments and the absurdities of international anarchy in which we live. In this war we are at least free from that miserable state of mind in which civilians "sacrifice their sons" in gigantic holocausts on foreign soil, while they remain at home in comparative comfort. We face the terrific threat of Nazi conquest together and in knowledge of our danger.

If the issue is invasion we all know for the moment where we stand. But we must look beyond this simple and unifying determination to resist the attack of the Nazis. If invasion is postponed or repelled, there remains the grim and almost certain prospect of long months of siege in darkness under constant threat of death from the air. Men who are not afraid to meet the invader may prove, as they did in France, no match for the war of waiting and propaganda. Mr. Churchill, a great rhetorician and an inspiring Commander-in-Chief, is so simple and wholehearted an English patriot that he seems not fully to understand the factors that in days of totalitarian war settle the crucial issue of morale. He appears to assume that morale is a question of physical courage, and he is right that in courage no section of this population is lacking. The deeper causes of breakdown are well understood by the Nazis who have never yet attacked a country which was not already morally undermined. We saw the danger this week when for the first time the East End was seriously hit from the air. We discuss this general question in our leading article this week. If bombing continues and the brunt falls on the poor, the mere question of endurance merges into the larger issues of doubt about the objects and results of the war. To-day we are all sufficiently educated about the world we live in to distrust people who assume that anything can be decided by a mere bombing match between ourselves and the Germans. The Nazis will not collapse because the R.A.F. sets fire to the Reichstag: they have done that themselves before now. It will have no more effect in Germany than a German bomb outside Buckingham Palace has on Britain. The common people must be assured, by facts as well as words, that we are fighting the common man's battle.

The Russian Factor

More than five months have passed since the Russians took the initiative towards the improvement of their relations with us, by inviting us to negotiate a new trading agreement. After needless delay, Mr. Churchill took the promising step of sending Sir Stafford Cripps as our Ambassador to Moscow. Nothing has yet resulted from the work of an envoy who had every qualification for success. It is proper that the question should be raised which Mr. Pritt answers in his own way in a communication on another page. We regret its excessive bitterness and the defeatist pessimism of its conclusion. Its attack on Mr. Churchill seems to us unwarranted and unfortunate, for among our solid grounds for confidence in his leadership we include his record, stretching over several years, of sanity and tact in all his public references to the Soviet Union. He understood betimes, what the disastrous leaders of his party could not grasp—that only by presenting Hitler with the certainty of opposition on two fronts, could we constrain him to keep the peace. Mr. Pritt is, to our thinking, mistaken in supposing that the Prime Minister's recent warning—that we accepted only such territorial changes as are made by mutual consent—had any reference to the Russian acquisition of Eastern Poland. In that all of us acquiesce, some of us with satisfaction. It follows pretty closely the British proposals of twenty years ago, known as the Curzon Line. The context shows that Mr. Churchill was thinking of the losses imposed on Rumania. He approved of the transfer of the Dobrudja to Bulgaria, but refused, very properly, to commit us to the Transylvanian settlement.

Why, then, is there no progress to report from Moscow? The answer is, we believe, in part British compliance with Japan over the Burma road and the pedantry of the Foreign Office in refusing to sanction the transfer of bank credits that stood to the account of the former Baltic States has irritated Moscow and thrown doubt on our sincerity. These States, now incorporated within the Soviet Union had enjoyed a largely fictitious independence: their internal structure was unstable and undemocratic: their return to the Russian system is, in all probability, as final as it was inevitable. By all the precedents the Foreign Office ought to recognise the accomplished fact and consent to the transfer of this property. Its punctilio suggests divided counsels and the continued influence within it of reactionaries who would rather lose the war than come to terms with Moscow.

We do not suppose that Stalin is considering any decisive change of front. He means to keep out of the war, and he will be influenced chiefly by his reckoning of our strength and our prospects. The utmost we might achieve to-day would be to convert him into a relatively friendly neutral. Of that a cordial and far-reaching trade agreement would be the symbol. But in our dealings with him we have to bear in mind the situation that will confront us next year, when, as we hope, we shall have made this island secure and begun to launch our offensive for the liberation of the Continent. The decisive factor in success may then be Russia's attitude. The movements of the Red Army on Germany's Eastern Front, and the influence of the Communist parties among the French and German workers might make or mar our chances of victory. We share Mr. Pritt's anxiety, but for our part we address ourselves hopefully to Mr. Churchill's genius for strategy. He cannot ignore Russia, nor can he, if she should remain hostile and suspicious, hope to rally the European masses. To place at the Foreign Office a lieutenant capable of executing the political side of such a strategical plan is even more essential than the choice of a military commander.

Vichy, Berlin and Rome

Alexander Werth writes: Great governmental stability was one of the promises made to the French people by the "national revolutionaries" of Vichy. Parliament, the source of all instability, was put out of action; but in a little over two months Marshal Pétain has thrice remade his cabinet. It is now not even clear who the head of the Government really is. The cabinet meetings are now presided over by Laval, and Marshal Pétain seems to be becoming more and more a figurehead.

Laval was, until recently, the leading pro-Italian in France. It was rumoured that the Germans were very dissatisfied with him, and that his days were numbered. But since his recent visit to the German bosses in Paris, his stock seems to have gone up. The Germans did not allow the men of Vichy to establish themselves in Paris; but they appear to have given Laval some other slight satisfactions, for a consideration. Both Vichy and the Germans are worried about the disobedience and disaffection shown by the French colonial Empire. French Equatorial Africa, the Cameroons, the French possessions in the Pacific and in India have gone over the General de Gaulle. In Indo-China there are strong anti-Japanese currents, and there are signs of serious unrest among the Arabs in North Africa, notably in Morocco. General Weygand has been succeeded as War Minister by General Huntziger, who humbly received from Hitler's hands the terms of the Armistice. Weygand has been appointed to Morocco as Vichy's general delegate for North Africa. What is the significance of this appointment? Vichy is obviously hoping that he will stop the rot there, and perhaps even win back the rebel colonies as best he can. That this has been done in agreement with Germany is probable. Germany fears the spread of pro-de Gaulle tendencies in the French Empire, and their contagious effect on France herself. She is practising appeasement in this field, and is discouraging Spain from attacking French Morocco, and Italy from being impatient about Tunisia. With German approval Radio-Lyon is able to give flagwaving broadcasts about "our glorious colonial Empire." Italy is, in the meantime, attacking the French in Tunisia for their ill-treatment of the Italians there; but the conquest of "Carthage" by Rome must wait until it suits the Germans. In view of her proposed operations against Egypt, it would pay Italy to keep Tunisia quiet for the present; and not to encourage "de Gaulle" ideas there; but her feelings are divided and the Italian people are no doubt wondering why Tunisia has not fallen into their lap three months after the French collapse. Two of the principal pro-Italian and Latin Bloc enthusiasts, who are perhaps less chameleon-skinned than Laval, have been dismissed from the Cabinet. They are Piétri and Ybarnégaray. Baudouin is still foreign Minister, but appears to be rather eclipsed by Laval. The negroid Lémery has apparently been sacrificed on the altar of Hitler's race theories. The dismissal of Marquet is more surprising, except that he also is a deputy, and with the exception of Laval, the parliamentarians have now all been eliminated. It is probable that most of the ex-deputies and ex-senators were opposed to a vigorous pursuit of the "war guilt" trials—which are such a boon to Germany, and so distasteful to the ordinary people of France. Riom was a source of embarrassment and of internal conflict at Vichy. The opponents of the trial have now been turned out of the Government. But M. Albert, who is demanding "six death sentences," remains Minister of Justice.

As for Weygand, will he faithfully carry out the instructions of Vichy and Berlin? Perhaps the old soldier, who cannot have felt happy in the servile, defeatist atmosphere of Vichy, will feel differently in the land of Lyautey, where there are still many soldiers who served under the great man. Or is that to expect too much from Weygand?

The truth probably is that Weygand, if and when he reaches Africa, will continue to sit on the fence until the result of the Battle for Britain has become clearer. But the oddest part of this story, however, is that the General's departure to his new command has been delayed, presumably under German pressure.

In the Far East

The hope that French Indo-China might at the last moment break away from the Vichy Government has been disappointed. Its Governor, Admiral Decoux, has conceded the main demands of Tokyo, so that this colony becomes for military purposes a dependency of the Japanese Empire. Twelve thousand of its troops will land, and enjoy full use of the Yunnan railway, with extra-territorial rights over a corridor twenty-four miles broad. The Chinese are probably right in interpreting this as the thin edge of a much bigger wedge: these troops are only the advance guard. Protests have been registered in Tokyo by Great Britain and the United States, but better still, it is reported that Washington has begun for the first time to discuss the Far East with Moscow. Until the U.S.A. deigns to collaborate with the U.S.S.R. little can be done to check Japanese aggression.

While Canadian and American resources have been pooled for the defence of the Atlantic coasts, nothing has yet been done to arrive at a common policy towards Japan. Canada continues to thwart Mr. Roosevelt's embargoes by her export of metals for use against China. But a recent debate in her Parliament shows that some leaders

of Canadian opinion are becoming critical. Mr. Coldwell, a Co-operative M.P. dwelt on the folly of arming the enemy of to-morrow. "We are erecting fortifications on the Pacific coast," he said, "and at the same time we are permitting dummy companies, operating under English names but controlled by Japanese interests, to acquire bodies of valuable ore and timber limits in the vicinity of our defence preparations." He mentioned the harbours of Sidney Inlet Mining Camp and four other harbours on the west coast of Vancouver island which had been dredged for the construction of oil storage tunnels under the supervision of a former Japanese naval captain. In one case the Japanese had had to buy nine Crown grants to get control of iron deposits. In another case a firm calling itself the N. S. McNeil Trading Company Ltd., and controlling 6 hundred million feet of timber is shown to be owned by the Nisson Rayon Pulp Company in Tokyo. A third instance was that of the Granby mines at Princeton which a few months ago renewed a contract with the approval of the Government whereby the Mitsui Co. have agreed to purchase all the copper this mine can produce for the next three years. The Axis, in short, is covertly acquiring a foothold in Canada.

"Prisoners of War"

The improvement which Sir John Anderson promised in the internment camps for refugees moves in some cases with exasperating slowness. In several of them the commandants have been changed, and the new men have given proof of their personal kindliness and courtesy. But they are still so seriously understaffed that no real improvement is possible. In one of them the staff is so shorthanded that the internees are locked into their sleeping quarters at 8.30 p.m., an arrangement that risks wholesale slaughter if bombs were to drop. In another the commander has been driven to pay for two assistants from his own pocket. The delay in postal communications is unpardonable, for it still averages a fortnight for letters and ten days for telegrams. Post Office bags lie untouched for days, for lack of staff to handle them. For the same reason, the arrangements promised to facilitate the departure of refugees who have places on the American quota lists seem to have broken down altogether. The prospect for the future is even more alarming, for we gather that it is proposed in some camps to keep the men under canvas throughout the winter. The obviously unfit are being transferred, but if tent life is held to be too strenuous for our soldiers, all of them young men who have ample exercise, with good food and clothing, to keep them fit, is it tolerable to impose it on men of all ages, poorly fed, clothed anyhow, and debarred from exercise?

Reports from Canada, where the refugees are officially known as "prisoners of war," tell of many maddening restrictions, especially on letters and parcels. But the food is good: the authorities have begun to separate the Nazis from the refugees, and a few students have been sent to McGill University. Many who ought never to have been sent to Canada are likely to be shipped back to England.

The mistakes of the Home Office have been as costly in money as in prestige. But it learns nothing from its own unimaginative blunders. Many refugees had volunteered for the Pioneer Corps before internment. They are now offered their freedom on condition that they volunteer again. They resent this bartering, not unnaturally, and claim to be free men before they enlist. But to understand the full scope of this epic of stupidity and prejudice, the heartrending story must be told at length, as "Judex" has told it in *Anderson's Prisoners* (Gollancz, 2s. 6d.). This little book is soberly written and carefully documented. It covers the whole episode from the appearance of the refugees before tribunals that knew nothing of German life and politics, down to the panic that sent them all to improvised and ill-managed camps. Its record of individual cases is a chronicle of waste and of unmerited suffering that few will read without anger.

All MSS. and letters should be addressed to the Editor, at 10 *Treat Turnstile High Holborn, London, W.C.*1.

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WHAT WE MUST DO

A COUNTRY which maintains a sharp class division between wealth and poverty at such a time as this suffers from a worse defect than if it were short of pilots or anti-aircraft guns. How many times have Ministers of the Crown said that in order to defend this island every man and woman must realise that this is a "people's war"? How few of them have realised the implications of "equality of sacrifice"? Such equality would be difficult enough to obtain even in a society which was far more ready than ours to accept drastic changes in its structure and organisation. At present the average bomb in a West End district destroys about one house (which is often empty); in a suburb two or three shoddily built houses will fall from the same impact, while in a slum area half a street of crowded dwellings may collapse from the same single bomb. Moreover, when the houses and business property of the well-to-do are damaged, the owners are not reduced to poverty; they do not require the help of Public Assistance Committees or charitable funds. Nor do rich people, thrown out of their houses, find themselves herded into school buildings without basements and kept there for days waiting for another bomb to bury them. One incident of this sort does more to undermine popular confidence than the loss of several men-of-war. Describing this shocking incident the *Daily Herald* rightly declares that it "must not happen again." But such incidents will happen again unless our authorities are induced to change their entire outlook on the relative needs of the rich and the poor. Men, women and children rescued from a bombed street are like soldiers miraculously evacuated from Dunkirk; they should be welcomed and congratulated, given good food and shelter and made to feel the nation's happiness in their escape. For their loss of home and property they should be compensated not from the charity of a Lord Mayor's Fund, but by the State. What is the State, after all, except an organisation designed to maintain the well-being of the common people who compose it?

There can be no "people's war," there can be no "equality of sacrifice" unless the nation's resources are pooled. When a row of working-class houses is reduced to rubble, the one effective reply is for the Government to compensate with alternative accommodation that is better than that which has been destroyed. For the agony of death and bereavement there can be no compensation for rich or poor; but for the destruction of the furniture and little comforts of living which in the case of poor people often represent all that can be saved in a lifetime, there should be prompt and immediate compensation. Those who have capital and who still have well-paid jobs can afford to take their losses with equanimity. That is the first principle—full compensation for the destitute and partial compensation, if we can afford it, for those who have merely lost property which they have capital to replace. By the same token, how do we hope to maintain "morale" if the docker or factory worker, thrown out of work by incendiary bombs, is offered no more than the dole for his part in the people's war?

Again, the bombing of the docks and of certain big factories brings home the point which was present in our minds at the beginning of this war. Dockers will continue to unload in spite of danger, factory workers will work long hours, only if they have sleep when they are off duty and if they believe that their wives and children are being adequately cared for. We recall vividly the devastation round the port of Barcelona where dockers continued their work until Franco was at the gates of the town. They had shelters which they could reach quickly when the bombers were above; their wives and children had long been evacuated into conditions of comparative safety and of such comfort as a state of war permitted. The large houses of the well-to-do were turned into children's hostels, and workers in danger zones had at least the knowledge that rationing was equal and that such comforts as were available in wartime were shared without class distinction. We have not begun to approach this conception in England; we must do so if we are to sustain the willing spirit of the mass of the population during days and nights of gruelling raids.

There is a further principle that must be applied at once. To attempt to run this war on a basis of private contract is altogether an absurdity. The loss of primary products stored in the dock areas would have been much smaller than it was during this last week if it had been under the control of the State. Far too much had been left in dock warehouses because that suits the convenience of private owners. We rightly congratulate our A.R.P. services, police and above all our firemen; but they can be no more than first-aid workers; they cannot save essential sources of production if raids on this scale are continued. No time should be lost in beginning to remove vital factories to really safe places; such places do exist—in

old pits and quarries and in holes that can be dug in hillsides. No questions of private ownership should prevent us from pooling our industrial resources. If an essential factory is hit, accommodation should be ready for it in a non-essential factory. The war will force us, whether we like it or no, to organise our total resources without fear or favour, without a tenderness to vested interests, without distinction of class. Four months have passed since Mr. Churchill announced that property would be conscripted as ruthlessly as man power. That promise has not been kept; to-day there is no alternative, if Hitler is not daily to improve his chances of defeating us.

To many people such a programme, occasioned by desperate necessity, will sound gloomy in the extreme. It need not be so. On the contrary, given good leadership, innumerable changes in our society which we have long known that we ought to make, can be made. Hitler may do us the service of ridding us of pluto-democracy. Nor need we relapse into fatalistic apathy because we feel individually helpless when the bombs scream down and aeroplanes drone overhead. Very possibly we have before us a desperate battle against an invading army; equally likely and even more difficult to meet is the threat of a dark winter in which much of our time will have to be spent in shelters. Since we must in that case live communally, we must begin at once to organise our life on a communal basis. When we are off duty there must be room to sleep as well as sit in a shelter; for those who are not sleeping, a shelter should, as far as possible, become a place of social intercourse, where meals and even entertainments can be organised. No doubt there is at this moment an important Committee of solemn persons thinking about what should be done for the "public morale" in the months to come. Their decisions will be of great importance: they may encourage us all to overcome our difficulties. If they think to sustain morale by strict rules and arrests of the disaffected, they will fail egregiously. The repressive side of Hitlerism does not sustain morale in Nazi Germany, nor would the Hitlerite form of Strength-through-Joy suit this country. But we must have our own popular Strength-through-Joy movement. We need committees, not of official persons, but of people who know the secret of public enjoyment to bring out of us our own latent capacity for organising and enjoying ourselves. Not so long ago Dr. Ley promised the German people a Strength-through-Joy celebration at Brighton on August 15th. His triumph has been, we trust, indefinitely postponed. Our reply must be to celebrate the triumph of the spirit of the British common people in Brighton and in every part of the country. That can only happen if they know from tangible evidence that the war has brought them not only suffering and the need for endurance, but also the hope of a world of more genuine equality, that, in a word, the "people's war" is the road to the people's Britain.

SLEEP WE MUST

AFTER a night raid on London, I looked in to see some of the homeless families who had been accommodated in a school. They were all unbelievably cheerful, and it was difficult to imagine that it was only a few hours since the bomber had roared down on top of them, unleashing his bombs and wreaking havoc on their humble back streets. They treated the whole thing with Cockney fatalism.

One youngster of four was careering round the playground and darting in and out of class-room doors, pretending that he was a Spitfire. As he swung past me he "banked" with outstretched arms and spluttered like a machine-gun. Considering that he and the rest of his family had been in their Anderson shelter when a bomb dropped within seven yards of them, I was amazed that he could play "pretend" at something which had been so nearly disastrous reality.

"Oh, him," said his mother when I remarked that the bomb did not seem to have made any impression on him, "he doesn't know a thing about it! He was sleeping on a bench at the back of the shelter when the explosion flung him on the floor. He was still asleep when I picked him up and put him back on the bench. . . ."

I found it was true of most of the younger children there. They had, in many cases, been carried, asleep, to the shelters and had gone on sleeping while the battle went on above them and while the bomber had dived, tipping its bombs to escape a chasing fighter. Sleep had been a second "steel shelter" to them. It had protected them from terrors, which might have done them as much damage as bomb splinters, leaving mental scars more difficult to heal than wounds.

I contrasted them with the soldiers I had seen in the wards of an emergency war hospital after Dunkirk. They were neurological cases who were slowly being dragged back out of the limbo of horror. In a few weeks they would be cured and they would forget the dread which made them dive under the beds every time a train passed or a training 'plane flew overhead. They included men of some of our crack regiments, men who before the Beaches of Dunkirk had shown themselves courageous against terrific odds. But the dive-bombers and the rain of machine-gun bullets from the air, without inflicting physical injury, had shattered them. "It was lack of food and sleep during the retreat—mainly lack of sleep," said the doctor to me. "They had gone on to the limits of their endurance. Physically and mentally they were exhausted."

And the treatment they received to restore them to normal again was food and sleep—mainly sleep. When they were brought to the hospital, they were given drugs which produced a Twilight Sleep, which made them immune from external disturbances and their internal fears. In this state they were able to take nutritious food to build up their physical stamina while sleep repaired their weary, fear-scarred minds. Twilight Sleep gave way gradually to deep, healing, natural sleep and to slow but satisfactory convalescence.

Many of them had lost their memories. Nature's own anaesthetic had blotted out some horror too awful to bear. Under hypnotism, the doctors coaxed them to disclose the facts. Gently, they extracted the septic horror from the deep, reluctant recesses of memory, as a surgeon removes a bullet or piece of shrapnel from the body, lest it suppurates and destroys.

Then when sleep, and rest and food had repaired the ravages, the patients were told what it was that they, when they were too weak to bear it, had mercifully forgotten. The blanks in their memories were healed, like clean wounds, and they could recollect the incidents—the machine-gunning of children, the bomb which wiped out their marching comrades, or whatever it might be—as harmlessly as other wounded men can regard a bullet or piece of shrapnel as something to be worn on their watch-chain.

That four-year-old boy and those nerve-shattered soldiers emphasise the importance of sleep in this *Blitzkrieg*. Sleep is both a protection and a healer. It is something we cannot afford to be without; something we must have in spite of the raids. It is more important to our morale than any "pep talks." Upon it depends not only the productivity of our war-industries but the maintenance of that incredible cheerfulness and disregard for danger which I found, abundantly, among the victims of air raids.

Sleep is still one of the mysteries of science. There is a natural rotation of sleeping and waking. To most of us it comes naturally at night, but it is not governed, as night-workers know, by the hours of the day. It does not even need to be taken at a stretch. Sailors become accustomed to watches—to working and sleeping alternately. Some men—Churchill, Wells, Edison, Shaw, Bevin are all examples—can condition themselves to only four or five hours' sleep at night and to "cat's naps" during the day.

The Prime Minister can work regularly until 2 a.m. and be up again at 7, but it is his unfailing rule to have an hour's sleep in the afternoon. Sometimes he snatches it in his car while travelling, but, whatever the circumstances, he contrives to awake refreshed and stimulated.

We may all have to cultivate habits like these—sleep when we can and how we can. Although some of us say, "I can never sleep in a strange bed" or "I find it impossible to sleep in a railway-train," continuous night-raids will teach us to snatch a few moments' sleep in buses, in an armchair, on the hard benches of shelters or even standing on our feet. I once slept all the way from Crewe to London hanging on the rack of a crowded train. It took a lot of massage to restore my numbed arm, but I had slept soundly enough.

Sleep is a complicated process about which there are many schools of scientific thought, probably all of them right. Some who have studied it say it is due to the ebb of blood from the brain. But it is likely that the gradual and slight anaemia of the brain is the effect and not the cause of sleep. One thing is demonstrable, if excitement or stimulants cause a rush of blood to the head, sleep is difficult. Another contributory factor is lack of oxygen in the nerve centres. It has been shown that in sleep we breathe in only half the amount of oxygen we require during waking hours. This leaves a residue of carbonic acid gas in the body and carbonic acid gas (as in a stuffy atmosphere) induces sleep. Another theory is that, just as bubbles disturb the surface of a pond, so do the chemical disturbances, created in the brain by our sensory impressions of sight, and hearing and our thoughts, keep our minds active during waking. But when we close our eyes and compose ourselves for sleep, these disturbances abate. The bubbles on the surface of the mind cease and tranquillity and sleep follow.

Then there is the gland theory. It is borne out by the study of the winter-sleep of animals. This accompanied by "hypopituitarism,"

or diminished secretion of the pituitary gland. This is the master-gland of the body, a pea-like body situated at the base of the brain, in close conjunction with the central nervous system. It has been called the " leader of the gland orchestra " which produces a symphony of health or a discord of ill-health. An ill-balanced pituitary secretion induces fat-formation, a lowered absorption of fat-storage, just as we find in hibernating animals. Men and women suffering from pituitary deficiency grow fat and drop off to sleep at, often, inconvenient moments, even in the middle of an argument. It is suggested that, through its subordinate glands, it dictates the slowing down of all functions. Through the thyroid, for instance, it slows down the heart while we are asleep. It causes the fall in the temperature of the body. Possibly, hypnotic drugs and sleeping draughts act through the pituitary.

More important, however, at this time is the evidence found by the late Prof. Pavlov, doyen of the Russian scientists, in his experiments on dogs. He made dogs " learn." He showed how, for example, a dog developed a " conditioned reflex " in response to the ringing of a bell. This was associated in the dog's brain with food. When the bell was sounded he would slaver in anticipation. But the experiments also disclosed inhibitions. That is to say, if the bell was rung frequently without the food being produced, the dog would lose interest; his mouth would not instinctively water. The association of ideas would become temporarily blurred. The dog would become bored and if the ringing were monotonous he would go off to sleep as certainly as a human patient would under the monotonous repetition of phrases or the monotonous flashing of a light by a hypnotist.

From this work it has appeared that throughout the brain there are local patches of inhibitions. We become inured to certain things and unconscious of them. A click produces a reflex in most of us, but I am quite unaware of the clicking of my own typewriter. That part of my brain is asleep.

In our waking hours, these inhibited patches are like the patterned shadows of a tree in the sunlight. The leaves stir and I become conscious of my typewriter. Sleep is the full shadow. Yet even then our conditioned reflexes are not entirely extinguished. A mother who can sleep through a thunderstorm, through the neighbour's radio, through the crowing of cocks, or, maybe, the wailing of sirens, will wake when her baby stirs.

This question of how much we can get used to is one of the things which is solved by experience. At the beginning of the war, for instance, I visited one of the quietest and drowsiest villages in England. Children from London had been evacuated there under a headmaster. The villagers were indignant when this headmaster insisted upon changing his comfortable billet away from the church because striking of the hours wakened him. The villagers, except when they were wakefully ill, were quite oblivious to the striking-hours and they thought he was just being a nuisance. In course of conversation with him, I found he came from " digs " in West London, in a street which rises sheer out of the District Railway with its constant clatter of trains. It was like O. Henry who rushed back to the town from a rest cure in the country because he could not bear the sound of the blades of grass sharpening themselves against each other!

The moral is that we gradually become accustomed to most things, like those air-raid children who after the excitement of the first warnings could sleep peacefully even through a bomb explosion. Like soldiers in the trenches we shall have to get accustomed to the noises, conditioned to responding at the right time, and develop the habit of sleeping when we can, even in queer places and queer poises.

Older children at school will have to have rest-breaks, like children at nursery schools, sleeping, perhaps, for an hour in the afternoon. Works may have to supply sleeping rooms for workers who need half an hour's nap at meal-times and for those who are detained by air raids. Voluntary workers could take over for a day the household duties of some of our harassed housewives in the heavily bombarded districts, to give them the luxury of a " long lie." Bedrooms must be moved to the ground floor or basements. We will learn to sleep in the shelters, either upright or on air mattresses or in hammocks.

But sleep we must.

RITCHIE CALDER

A LONDON DIARY

THE church bells really did ring on Saturday night, and at least in the district where I was staying the Home Guards were called up for duty in the middle of the night. I see that some people are already talking about a gross blunder and all the rest of it. But it is clear that there was evidence to justify the " alarm ," though not, of course, the church bells which were just someone's " blooming error." If the barges were ready and other military signs suggested invasion it was as well to be too quick rather than too slow on the trigger. You will find the incident anticipated in the Napoleonic wars when an earlier Home Guard were watching the coast. Hardy has a delightful passage in the *Dynasts* which describes the watchers with their eyes on the beacons—the equivalent of the church bells 135 years ago. The excitable young soldier says " Boney's expected every day, the Lord be praised. Our hopes are to be fulfilled. . . ." Which is what Mr. Duff Cooper, rather than the private, seems to feel to-day. Then comes the beacon light and the countrymen taking to the roads on the false alarm (which is what they are instructed not to do to-day). One suggests that it is another false alarm; there have been, he says, nine and he suspects a Fifth Column rumour: " one of the enemy sent to sow these tares, so to speak it, these false tidings and coax us into fancied safety." Times have changed less than we think.

* * *

Experience of air raids in Spain and Finland has led John Langdon-Davies to argue, in his book *Nerves and the Nazis* (Routledge), that the object of bombing is not so much to kill as to undermine morale; the object of A.R.P. should therefore be efficiency in winning the war, particularly in maintaining production, rather than safety. Even a very slight sinking of the heart each time the siren goes will finally cause very considerable nervous wear and tear; we must learn, therefore, how to counter-attack the Nazis with our minds even during an air raid. You can't expect your mind to work at its very clearest during a raid, but you can train it to adopt at once a calm and common-sense attitude by dwelling in advance on such facts as the following: That bombers do not " circle overhead for hours," they fly in a straight line at 240 m.p.h.; that even if you actually see one, the only danger to *you*, since it cannot aim sideways, is if it is coming straight at you; that even in that event the period of actual danger is considerably less than one minute; that if you count 60 after a nearby explosion you are then quite safe because the aeroplane is already four miles away; that each time you hear a bomb explode your own safety is increased because *that* bomb hasn't hit you; that most of the noise is our own noise, and the more of it there is the worse for the bomber; that photographs of air-raid damage show you that one house which was completely wrecked and not the ninety and nine left quite intact—the book is crammed with such " tips." Above all, says Mr. Langdon-Davies, remember that you will be happiest during an air raid if you have something to do. Personally, I find a satisfactory remedy in plugging my ears and then going on doing exactly what I was doing when the raid started.

* * *

The treatment of Mr. X represents a final turn of the screw of petty persecution which deserves record. Mr. X, a retired preacher living in a small village in the middle of England, was apparently suspected of Fifth Column leanings; he was visited and revisited by the police, cross-questioned, cold-shouldered by the village, subjected to all the familiar vexations of local persecution, and finally made the subject of an Order by the Home Secretary requiring him not to leave the district without notice, to stay at home after dark and to report weekly to the police, and forbidding him to possess a wireless, a telephone, a motor car or a bicycle. The nearest police station is four miles away and no bus runs from it to Mr. X's village, so the order obliges him to do an eight-miles journey on foot once a week which in winter will be a formidable undertaking for a man over 60, especially as the roads are apt to be flooded. How far there was justification for these onerous restrictions I do not know. My complaint begins with the following incident. Nothing in the Home Office order forbad the wife of Mr. X from having a bicycle, and since the tradesmen no longer call, she uses her bicycle to do her shopping. Mr. X accompanies her on foot and helps her to bring home parcels. Last week as they were coming home laden with purchases, Mr. X assisted Mrs. X to push her bicycle up a hill. This act was observed by the village policeman who immediately descended on Mr. X and accused him of being in possession of a bicycle in contravention of the prohibiting order. Mr. X's explanation that it was his wife's bicycle and that he was only helping her to push it up the hill was received with official indifference. He was severely reprimanded and I understand has now received from Headquarters a special notice warning him of the results of infringing the order about bicycle-possessing!

* * *

A correspondent sends me the following curiously prophetic passage from a letter written by the poet Cowper to his friend, the Rev. John Newton, December 15th, 1783:

> Should the point be carried, and man at last become as familiar with the air as he has long been with the ocean, will it in its consequences prove a

mercy, or a judgment? I think, a judgment. First, because if a power to convey himself from place to place, like a bird, would have been good for him, his Maker would have formed him with such a capacity. But he has been a groveller upon the earth for six thousand years, and now at last, when the close of this present state of things approaches, begins to exalt himself above. So much the worse for *him*. Like a truant schoolboy, he breaks his bounds, and will have reason to repent of his presumption. Secondly, I think it will prove a judgment, because with the exercise of very little foresight, it is easy to prognosticate a thousand evils which the project must necessarily bring after it; amounting at last to the confusion of all order, the annihilation of all authority, with dangers both to property and person, and impunity to the offenders. Were I an absolute legislator, I would therefore make it death for a man to be convicted of flying, the moment he could be caught; and to bring him down from his latitudes by a bullet sent through his head or his carriage, should be no murder. Philosophers would call me a Vandal; the scholar would say that, had it not been for me, the fable of Daedalus would have been realised; and historians would load my memory with reproaches of phlegm, and stupidity, and oppression; but in the meantime the world would go on quietly, and if it enjoyed less liberty, would at least be more secure. . . .

* * *

The cheeseparing policy of the Treasury sometimes results in incredible meanness. Here is an instance. A man who has served his country for many years abroad and has lost his livelihood in recent cataclysms returned home. He had been in the intelligence corps during the last war and had attained the rank of acting captain; after a few months salaried Government service abroad he became (in 1920) an honorary consular officer at a foreign port, receiving an office allowance to cover expenses, but ostensibly no salary. He had however no other appreciable source of income. Shortly before the war he was accepted for the officers' emergency reserve, but did not take up the appointment because he was required at his consular appointment, and refused a second offer of a commission after the war had started, in order to remain at his post, in spite of the fact that he was receiving no salary and that his business had suffered greatly as a result of the war. He remained at his post after the German invasion, helping with the evacuation of British subjects and showing great coolness and courage in the process, until the town was practically empty; even the post office officials had fled. He then managed to reach home with his foreign wife, and his old mother aged 80. His office allowance ceased from the moment he left, on the technicality that his office had closed and not one penny more could be paid him by the department which knew and appreciated his services. Even the commission which had twice before been offered him was now withheld, probably on account of his foreign associations. It was three months before employment was found for him with another Government department and if he had had to wait another week literally, his only recourse would have been the public assistance.

* * *

I was at the Denham Studios the other day when an air raid interrupted the shooting of *Major Barbara*. It will be one of the minor tragedies of this war if anything is allowed to prevent the completion of this film. *Pygmalion*, which was also produced by Mr. Pascal, was one of the best films ever made. Indeed, it was in some respects better than the play, for unlike most films made from a play or book, it retained the original dialogue and the intellectual content of the original, while offering a background that is impossible on the stage. *Major Barbara* is an even bigger undertaking. The present production, acted by a whole firmament of stars, sacrifices nothing, as far as I can gather, of Shaw's discussion of the problem of war and capitalism and armaments, and it includes, I believe, sixteen new scenes which Shaw has specially written for the film. Mr. Pascal is an exacting producer. When little Jenny Hill (played by Deborah Kerr) had to be sloshed in the jaw by Bill Walker, he insisted that she really had to be sloshed at each rehearsal, as well as when the picture was taken. She tells me that she was sloshed good and proper, with the result that her reactions from a blow in the face are highly realistic, needing neither glycerine for tears nor red ink for blood. There is a great scene in the Albert Hall, with Sybil Thorndike playing the part of the Salvation Army leader; the scenes in the Salvation Army hut (Rex Harrison looks well in this uniform) and the Undershaft munition factories will be highly convincing, and from what I have seen of the rehearsals Wendy Hillier will add to her fame as Major Barbara. An immense amount of money, perhaps too much, has been spent on this film and a great deal of time, I hope not too long, has been spent on this production. When it does appear it will be a great event, satisfying to the intellect as well as to the eye.

* * *

I passed a pleasant hour in an air raid the other day reading Ethel Mannin's *Rolling in the Dew* (Jarrolds). Among her many qualities I have never before included satirical wit and unsentimental humour. But as a piece of satire on a particular kind of crank—the nudist and much that goes with nudism—I can heartily recommend this book. There is, of course, a nudism that is very agreeable. The other day, for instance, I found myself one of a party of young men and women who were bathing without costumes. Bathing, you see, is a natural thing to do without a costume. But being nude when you are not bathing is not natural and the regular nudist's trouble is that he has to be without a costume for the sake of being without a costume. Once, staying in the country, I looked out of the window upon a group of strange figures. They were playing ball and leapfrog though neither of those would have been natural occupations. If you look at the illustrations in Ethel Mannin's book you will see why these people looked funny. Most people are seen to better advantage decently draped. Solemn and scraggy old gentlemen, hot protruberant middle-aged women, youths with nothing on but a pair of spectacles and shy girls trying to pretend they like it—such a party looks thoroughly odd and is the very opposite of sexually stimulating. I remember when I first came to this journal, rather more than nine years ago, an exuberant correspondence on the subject of nudism which appeared under the heading of the *Thrill of Nakedness*. There never was a greater mistake and Ethel Mannin's book explains in the most entertaining way just why the thrill is so distressingly absent.

* * *

Another little book that interested me in a very different way is *Creed or Chaos* by Dorothy Sayers. I need not say that any book by Dorothy Sayers is written with great distinction. This is a lecture that she delivered to the Church Tutorial Classes Association four months ago. She considers Christianity in the light of the war from the point of view of an orthodox member of the Anglican Church. She discusses her contemporaries, the "one per cent. of intelligent and instructed Christians" and the "frank and open heathen" and "the ignorant Christians, who combine a mild gentle-Jesus sentimentality with vaguely humanistic ethics," and finally "the more or less instructed church-goers, who know all the arguments about divorce and auricular confession and Communion in two kinds, but are about as well equipped to do battle on fundamentals against a Marxian atheist or a Wellsian agnostic as a boy with a pea-shooter facing a fanfare of machine guns." She argues that the particular standard of ethical values which derives from Christian dogma cannot be upheld except on the foundation of Christian dogma. Once the basic dogmas of Christianity are dropped, then men are on a slippery slope which leads straight downhill to the abyss of Fascism. This is a straight challenge to those who say that they believe in the ethics but not in the dogmas of Christianity. Men, she holds, cannot live without faith, and they must have authority on which to base their faith. There is more truth in this argument for "faith" than many ethicists and agnostics care to admit. It is true that men seek for authority (Christ rebuked them for it) and that their faith often utterly fails to withstand a severe test if they have discarded such traditional props as the Resurrection, the Divinity of Christ, and the Life to Come. But Dorothy Sayers at no point discusses the difficulties we have in believing the dogmas that she regards as essential. All that she seems to me to say is that men need a faith and if they do not find a good one they will fall into superstitution. For my part, therefore, I found her book quite unhelpful. I cannot believe in things because I am told it would be good for me to believe in them, unless I see grounds for holding them to be true.

* * *

A reader in Northern Ireland sends me the following Irish story. "The other day I received a picture post-card from Killybegs, Co. Donegal, Eire.

"It was from a most innocent-looking friend of mine who was on holiday in Donegal. The correspondence side of the post-card told me how he had been taking a snapshot of Killybegs harbour when the local Garda (policeman) came along, took out the film and tore it up. When my friend protested, the Garda said 'Sure the British Fleet might use the photo to make its way into the harbour.' I turned the card over to see what was on the other side. It was a picture of Killybegs harbour."

* * *

In one Government department instructions have been issued to the L.D.V.s about defence against the enemy and against possible rioters at home. If the order is given to shoot, the L.D.V.s are instructed to shoot to kill but warned that any L.D.V. who shoots "out of a personal grudge" is "liable to be suspended"! If this were not printed on a solemn sheet of instructions issued to L.V.D.s I should suppose it was a rare example of official humour.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of the column goes this week to Audrey Stanley.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1.

As Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Mauritius he has learned how British a people can be in spirit though the language be French.—"Atticus" in the *Sunday Times*.

A few days ago I was talking to one of the most devoted, but also one of the most critical patriots I have ever met. For half an hour he kept up a stream of blistering commentary upon our British habits, and you might have thought that he judged us to be about the most useless of all God's peoples.

Then he paused, and said slowly: "None the less, I am utterly convinced that in the present circumstances of the world the British are the Chosen People."—Canon Roger Lloyd in the *Daily Dispatch*.

The mad Englishman and woman has a fondness for the bathroom. We are a clean-living race; we fight cleanly . . . and the Nazi knows this, and takes full advantage of our scrupulous regard for the rules of warfare and all games . . . and we have been laughed at by the foreigner for our keenness for a bath.—*The Sunday Sun*.

MAN AND THE SOIL

FOR the second time this century Britain has been given the chance to restore its agricultural life. We bungled the last chance; if we bungle this we shall have no right to expect a third. It is now or never.

The material framework looks promising. There is a grant of £2 per acre for ploughing grassland, the first essential step in many cases to release its fertility. There are grants for 50 per cent. of the cost of lime and 25 per cent. of the cost of basic slag put on the land, a grant of 50 per cent. of the cost of field drainage. The State will even bear half the cost of cleaning out neglected ditches. Farm wages have risen sufficiently to bear comparison with urban wages, prices have been adjusted to meet them, and the principle is accepted that the consumer has no right to demand cheap food at the expense of the labourer's standard of living. The ordinary town-dweller, as always happens in wartime, is willing and even anxious that nothing should be spared within reason to get the maximum out of the land.

But there is all the difference in the world between well-farmed land yielding to the full and land exploited and plundered to give us that "cheap" food that promises to be the dearest food man ever bought. When, in Victorian times, we began putting home agriculture second to the exploitation of the cornlands of the New World, we gave away much more than the produce of home acres. We gave away a large slice of national life. Like the Roman Empire and the Greeks before us, we launched out on the same experiment of divorcing ourselves from the soil and trying to dodge the curse of Adam. In their case it proved disastrous; there is little reason to suppose that our experience should be different.

Have we prospered? In terms of money, yes. But in terms of life, in terms of bodily and spiritual health, in terms of fitting ourselves in to the whole scheme of creation with anything approaching harmony in all the things that make living worth while, we have surely failed. There is a growing volume of opinion that we have made a colossal mistake, and mankind, by its attitude towards the land, is heading for a catastrophe that will make the Hitlers and the Mussolinis in their brief little day seem like midge bites in an earthquake. Many have begun to sound the alarm. Few have put the case so clearly as Sir Albert Howard and Lord Northbourne in two books that have just been published.* They both show how man's predatory hand, breaking all the laws of Nature in eagerness to ravish the fruits of the earth, is endangering his existence. Sir Albert speaks with forty years of agricultural research behind him; Lord Northbourne was a reader in agriculture at Oxford before he began running a large farm and market gardens.

Nature's method of managing the soil is by mixed farming. Plants and animals are always found together. Mixed farming and mixed crops are the rule, nothing is wasted. The rainfall in particular is carefully conserved, for the soil, with its sponge-like humus made up of decaying matter, absorbs the rain that is broken into a fine spray by the leaves. Any excess is gently transferred to the subsoil and, in due course, to the rivers. Earthworms and burrowing animals are Nature's drainage and aeration channels, the plants draw their mineral matter from the subsoil. Humus provides the organic manure; the soil the mineral matter. Nature never squanders her reserves of fertility, but carries them in easily accessible form in the upper part of the soil in large quantities. There is nothing hand-to-mouth about Nature's way of farming and the crops and stock look after themselves. They need no vaccines and serums, no spraying machines, no veterinary service. For although poisons and disease are there, crops and animals in their natural state have positive health and can resist them.

Obviously, man has a job to do in adapting Nature's methods of farming to suit his needs. We cannot sit down and live on what the primaeval forest will produce for us. But what man is doing all over the world is to plunder the store of Nature's centuries of careful husbandry. He has torn up the trees, so that the unimpeded rains sweep the soil bare to the virgin rock; he has grown crop after crop of corn on the North American prairie lands so that the exhausted soil turns to dust and blows away. Elsewhere he has crowded his livestock on to once fertile plains and grassy savannahs so that the over-grazed herbage loses its virtue and becomes a bare, infertile desert. From 30 to 50 per cent. of America's original total of fertility is estimated to have gone. The Missouri basin has lost an average of 7 inches of topsoil in 24 years—and the mean rate of soil formation is estimated at 1 inch in 10,000 years. The biggest new Californian desert has advanced in places 40 miles in one year, destroying 2,500 farms. Australia is probably going faster than America, only man's civilising influence has not been at work there so long. In Africa the Sahara moves southward at half a mile a year, and within the memory of middle-aged men parts of the Orange Free State noted for their luxuriance have become arid wastes. In parts of China, Russia, Canada and South America the same story can be told. In our own country some of the light fen soils have begun to blow away and soil in East Anglia and Bedfordshire. As the land disappears because it is exploited, international debt piles up, and, in the vain hope of paying the interest on it, longer hours are spent in still more exploitation to wring the last ounce of "profit" out of the exhausted land. If "economics" bears any relation to the word's original meaning, these are the economics of the madhouse.

The soil, we say, has lost its fertility. Yet this is only another way of saying that the soil has become sick, and its illness is quite naturally reflected in the animals and ourselves. Recently 4,700 people living in a large town were examined and only 16 were found who showed no sign of "sub-normal health." The local medical and panel committees of Chester issued a *Medical Testament* in 1939 in which they said: "The fall in fatality is all the more remarkable in view of the rise in sickness. Year by year doctors have been consulted by their patients more and more often." Excluding the mentally afflicted, we now spend £275,000,000 a year on public health services alone. Year by year we become more ready to be satisfied if we escape illness and to think that hygiene is a substitute for health. Mastitis, tuberculosis, abortion and Johne's disease add yearly to the dairy farmer's troubles, foot-and-mouth is no longer a slight incident in the life of most farm animals. Sheep diseases in some areas appear to be increasing, and even the plants now have to be protected with a whole range of precautionary measures once unheard of.

This is the position at which we have arrived by losing our instinct and respect for the land. Lest it be thought too gloomy, let me add at once that both Sir Albert Howard and Lord Northbourne and most who have given thought to this subject are agreed that it is not too late. There is time for mankind to call a halt in his exploitation of the earth, although not unlimited time. Some land is lost irretrievably, but some that is damaged can be repaired and there are still reserves. But what both these agricultural experts insist upon is that we must make our ways of farming conform a little more closely with Nature's ways, practise mixed farming and return to the soil the waste products of animals and plants. Thus will humus be formed and maintained and the soil given back its health again. Sir Albert Howard has done a great public service in making the "Indore" process known to so many people. Full details of it are given in his book and suffice it to say that it has successfully produced plants and animals resistant to disease. The smallholdings of China, working on these lines, are still maintaining a steady output without loss of fertility after forty centuries of management. There are, of course, other methods, such as those experimented with by Herr Pfeiffer and Miss Bruce, but all of them are based upon the need to return to the soil its organic by-products.

There are still places in the world where perfect health in man

* *An Agricultural Testament*. By Sir Albert Howard. Oxford University Press. 15s.
Look to the Land. By Lord Northbourne. Dent and Sons. 7s. 6d.

can be found. Sir Robert McCarrison has told of the Hunza people in north-western India, who enjoy great health and vitality, are good-tempered and peaceable; there are certain Eskimo tribes singularly free from disease, active and contented; and Chinese peasants in the highly cultivated areas who are of splendid physique, agile and cheerful. All these people have only one thing in common. They eat all manner of things, cooked and raw and in varying quantities. They are not food faddists. But their system of farming is the same in this respect: they return all available organic material to the soil after careful treatment by methods that would enable the soil easily to assimilate it, and, so far as possible, they eat the whole of each plant or animal that gives them food. There is little outward difference between the actual food eaten by the Hunzas and other tribes in northern India, but the difference in physique, health and temper is very marked and appeared to be dependent not upon what was eaten but how it was grown. Rats fed upon Hunza food were disease-free. Rats fed upon the diet of the average poor Bengali soon became the prey of all kinds of diseases. When rats were given the diet of a poorer-class European family, they lost their hair, developed boils, bad teeth and crooked spines, got neurasthenia, bit their attendants, and after sixteen days began to bite each other.

It is encouraging that so far the war has made us in this country return more to the principles of mixed farming and the methods that once made Britain the Mecca of all agriculturists. But we must begin thinking now what we are going to do to retain and increase the ground gained in the past twelve months. For if Sir Albert Howard and Lord Northbourne and many others who have reached similar conclusions are right, the world may one day be faced with an inability to grow the food it needs. In England, where we have neglected the land rather than exploited it, the damage done is not great. We can ensure that our soil at least remains fertile. But it will mean more than a change in technique; it will mean a fundamental change in outlook, so that we think of the soil not in the dead terms of statistics but in terms of life, as the environment of which we are a part, whence we can draw nourishment for body and spirit, derive happiness as well as good food, and find again the well-being of a reborn rural civilisation.

L. F. EASTERBROOK

MORE JOTTINGS

MANY people must have been struck by the irony that runs through life when just before six o'clock on Wednesday the sirens sounded and, almost simultaneously, the B.B.C. announced to wireless listeners: "You will now hear the song, 'Lullaby,' words by Walter de la Mare." It seemed incongruous to break into an air-raid with a lullaby, and one smiled at the absurdity. And yet, from my common-sense point of view, the really incongruous feature of the situation was that the air-raid warning had broken into the lullaby. The lullaby was a symbol of the world that is permanent: the air-raid warning was a symbol of the temporary, doomed to as short a life as a popular revue or an unpopular novel. It is not merely a matter of conjecture: we know that the songs of Mr. Walter de la Mare will live when the songs of the sirens have faded into the silence of the past.

Incongruity seems always to give us a certain amount of pleasure, whatever the circumstances. I remember as a child being in a Presbyterian church in Coleraine one beautiful summer morning and listening reverently to the reading of the Scriptures by the minister, and how, just as he had reduced us to awed silence with the verse: "Some said it thundered and others that an angel spake," an ass brayed somewhere outside into the Sabbath peace. The memory of that bray in so sacred an atmosphere has remained with me through life, imparting something of the bliss that Wordsworth got from the memory of his daffodils. I also like to think of that scene in the old Queen's Theatre in Dublin when during a melodrama the drop-scene fell accidentally, laying the hero and heroine flat on the stage, and of how the heroine, having struggled to her feet, went on unconcernedly to speak the next words of her part, which happened to be: "Fate has played us a scur-rvy trick." What would life be without incongruity?

What would life be without this and that, is an old question, indeed. I remember reading a story some time ago in one of Miss Marjorie Bowen's books in which she told of an eighteenth-century Vicomte who, as he sipped his coffee after dinner one evening, murmured to his friends: "What would life be without coffee?" and then, after a moment's reflection, added: "But, after all, what is life *with* coffee?" In the same way, perhaps, when we ask "What would life be without incongruity?" we may find men of the old cynical tradition raising the second question: "But, after all, what is life *with* incongruity?" Both questions seem to me to be justified. At the same time, the first question seems to me the wiser. I believe both in coffee and in incongruity, though not in too much of either.

Perhaps we have been having rather too much incongruity lately. The very name "siren" for an air-raid warning introduces an element of incongruity. The song of the original sirens was sweet and was believed to lure men to their destruction. The song of the modern siren is certainly not sweet—it would be booed off the platform even at the most charitable village concert—and its object is to lure human beings to safety. It is pleasant to remember, however, when we speak of sirens, that, according to the Greek legend, during the voyage of the Argonauts Orpheus sang so sweetly that no one troubled to listen to the sirens when the ship was in the danger-zone. Thereupon, the sirens, the *Encyclopaedica Britannica* tells us, "who, since they were to live only until some one heard their song unmoved, flung themselves into the sea and were changed into sunken rocks." No doubt the same thing will happen again. It is not the poets, but the sirens, who are doomed.

I was particularly aware of the incongruity of the world we live in one morning during the week-end in the country. The cat, who had paid me the unusual compliment of sleeping on my bed, became sick just after dawn, and I had to go downstairs and let him out into the garden. I followed him out, and into what a gilded world his sickness had introduced me! The level light of the early sun does really paint the lily. And it paints things far less lovely than the lily. Wordsworth observed how it painted the not entirely beautiful city of London:

> The city now doth like a garment wear
> The beauty of the morning.

The leaves of every tree, every flower, every bird, wore at that hour a garment of lucent gold invisible in the light of common day. I once saw a humming bird in that level, early sunlight on Vancouver Island, and I thought I was in Heaven. Now, I saw hundreds upon hundreds of house-martens settled on the pylon-wires busily meditating a return to Africa. After a night under zooming aeroplanes, how peaceful the world seemed, how transformed by the pale gold light, pale as the gold in a holy picture! The very joyousness of the martens throughout the summer has been incongruous with the history of our times. Till the day of their death, I am sure, all of them will look back on the summer of 1940 as the summer of their lives. Flies high up, flies low down, millions of them, in perpetual sunshine—ecstatic roamings into the sky, ecstatic skimmings of the pond, touching it with their breasts as they rose to resume their wild ice-hockey in the air. They, at least, have received an excellent impression of our modern civilised world.

Not that birds are the only living creatures who have been finding the world a good place lately. I went into an inn the other evening where a grey-haired Canadian soldier was standing drinks at such a rate that, as soon as the landlord produced a round of drinks, he called for the same again. He looked extremely happy. A villager came in and greeted him with: "How are you feeling?" "A hundred per cent.," replied the Canadian with profound sincerity; "if I was any better, I'd be sick." How like, with a slight difference of vocabulary, the confession of a child who has been happy at a party!

The more I see of Canadians, the more I like them. The percentage of good-natured, honest human beings seems to me to be unusually high among them, though they themselves admit that they have brought over a few black sheep. I met a Canadian in a train coming up to town after the week-end, and, in the course of talk he referred to these bad eggs and told me how he and his comrades dealt with him in the town near which they were camped. "If we see one of them insulting a woman," he said, "we take hold of him and drag him round the first corner and try to knock decency into him in our own way. We think that's the best way to teach them. Anybody has a right to speak to anybody, but not to insult a woman." The chivalry of the Wild West evidently still exists even outside fiction.

The Canadian went on to talk about air raids and to say that, when an air raid was on, he always liked to be in the open. When an air raid was on, he said, he and his comrades raced to the top of a hill to get a good view. As he was talking, the train stopped near a gasometer and a curious rat-a-tat-tat was audible from the air above. A woman with a child asked: "Is that machine-guns?" To reassure her, he said that it was probably some kind of factory-machinery. Uncertain myself, I put my head out of the window to look. A woman in the next compartment had already her head out of the window. "Is that machine-guns?" she asked me. "I expect it's a pneumatic

drill," I told her, being one of nature's ostriches. "A nice place to be caught in an air-raid," she said with a cheerful laugh. By the time we reached the London terminus, it was clear that it was machine-guns all right. An air-raid warden was calling: "Air raid. They're just overhead. Please take shelter quickly." I had an enormous basket of potatoes and other vegetables to carry—about a ton in weight, I should say—and with this in my arms I struggled towards the shelter. "I'll be off," said the Canadian, "and see if I can get a bus." The rest of us descended into the shelter and looked for seats. One little man sat down on the end of a sort of sliding staircase and rolled off. The rest of us sat on benches, some reading newspapers. After about ten minutes a porter came down and called out: "Does anybody want Epsom or Cheam?" Several men rose and went out, determined not to miss their trains, air raid or no air raid. After another half-hour or so, the All Clear sounded, and we drove the five miles to our home by a route along which not a single broken pane of glass was to be seen. The face of London as we saw it, indeed, was utterly incongruous with the face of London as we knew it to exist in those areas that had been bombed. But this particular incongruity, though strange, was not amusing. Y. Y.

AN OPEN LETTER TO SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS

DEAR STAFFORD,

Many of your innumerable friends here in Britain are very worried. We suspect that Halifax is using you as a screen to blind public opinion while he destroys the chances of better relations with the Soviet Union.

We were happy when you went to Moscow, and hoped it might be the beginning of better things. But now we see that relations between the two countries are as bad as ever they were, that Halifax and his hostile group of reactionaries have a free hand to lead us to disaster, and that the Prime Minister is at any rate doing nothing to stop them.

Nobody supposes that all the faults are on one side; still less do any of us think that any Ambassador could do better than yourself. But the plain truth is that the reactionaries do not mean to let you achieve any improvement in relations.

What was the main—the first—thing for which you went to Moscow? To bring about a trade agreement, we thought. It was sinister enough that, although the Soviet Government has proposed negotiations as early as March 27th, Halifax had blocked and parried the proposal for eight weeks before you were appointed. But to-day it is worse; nearly three months have gone since Stalin received you, and there is not the slighest sign of an agreement.

Of course, Halifax and the other enemies of good relations are too cunning to oppose an agreement openly. They sabotage it by indirect methods. Soon after your interview with Stalin, they insulted the U.S.S.R. publicly by ignoring its existence in a matter of the greatest political importance, their decision to betray the Burma Road. A fortnight later, without any legal justification, they seized or arrested the gold of the Baltic Banks, which had been lawfully transferred to the U.S.S.R. before the change in the status of the Baltic States. And then they openly paraded their affection for the Baltic Fascist regimes by refusing to recognise the decision of those States to enter the Soviet Union. Surely it is sheer hypocrisy to send you along to offer a trade agreement in the atmosphere they have created by this conduct.

And I fear it is no good looking to the Prime Minister to put things right. He has chosen the events in Rumania as the occasion to make—on September 5th—the important statement that the British Government recognises no territorial changes in the present war except with the consent and goodwill of the parties concerned. He may have been referring in part to the *emigré* Government of Poland, which has proclaimed, without any protest on his Government's part, that it is at war with the U.S.S.R.; but he was certainly referring also to the Baltic States, which beyond doubt have effectively entered into the Soviet Union, and was publicly asserting that the real will of the peoples of those countries is expressed by the groups of bankers, landowners and manufacturers which recently ceased to hold power. This can serve no purpose and produce no result save to worsen relations.

We are forced to conclude that Halifax and his group exploited you—and the respect which so many people here feel for you—to hoodwink public opinion, and to conceal from it the fact that the be-devilling of relations with the Soviet Union which is in truth inherent in their policy and outlook was and is still being pursued at the very time when Hitler's attack was sharpening.

We see now that they always meant to use you as a screen for their unremitting conspiracy against better relations with the Soviet Union. You would never willingly be their tool, or join in their conspiracy. Do not, I beg you, let them exploit you any longer.

2 Pump Court, Temple, E.C.4. D. N. PRITT

[This communication is discussed in our Comments this week.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

THE THIEF

HE must do it. His father would never know. For days now he'd been trying to make up his mind. Could he dare? They looked so beautiful there, on the clean white pages, each one carefully glued on to the gum-paper, the gum-paper folded under it, neatly invisible at the top, and then stuck so perfectly, bang in the middle of the square, specially designed for them, in the huge heavy album. Each page was thick and gilt-edged, each page rich with its coloured squares of treasure, all pasted in with such loving, expert care. There, in the beginning, the Black Penny—twelve of them in a row—Queen Victoria's face a dozen times on the dark perforated pieces of ancient paper. And there, Edward VII—"unused"—fresh as yesterday, his head in a ring on a long thin green one, again on a long thin red one, marked One Sovereign. One whole Pound, even at that time. What now, after all these years? What price this one, this Queen of Beauties, this old faded blue three-cornered Cape of Good Hope? Ah, just that one! Just one—who'd know? His mouth would water as he gazed down at it in greed, and guilt. For every time he went to the drawer, his father's drawer, took the key, crept over to the cupboard, unlocked it—he trembled, flushed all over; and his hands shook as he removed the great gilded volume. Even when he had it on his knees, alone on his father's chair, he'd sniff the stale tobacco, glance fearfully at the old pipes on the table beside him, and steal away from there, away from that tweed-and-tobacco smell, to a corner of the sofa opposite, his mother's favourite place.

Not that his father sat here any longer. Would he ever sit here again? That was a vital question. Gone two years, to the War—B.E.F. *France*. That was nowhere, not even anywhere on the flag-covered map at school. And two whole years, that was an age of time. Only five times that long ago he was barely born. David could only just remember him. He had never been close. He barked rather; seldom laughed, and ruled Home with a perpetual pipe. He was little but a smell now: tweed-and-tobacco; a moustache to be avoided; and a face, too, that felt, for an instant twice a day, like sand-paper.

Of course, they didn't always come back, fathers. If you were at school you went home suddenly, returning a week later wearing a black tie and a black band on your left arm. People were decent to you then—awed by the incomprehensible privacy of Loss. If you were at home—well, you didn't know, yet. There was always something to do with a telegram, and the front page of the *Times*.

In any case, even if he should return and find out, how could he ever know who'd done it? And my God, just think what they'd say at school! He could swop just one Cape of Good Hope for Levett's entire collection. Imagine Levett's face when he saw that one faded blue triangle!

Well, there was only to-day left. To-morrow would be too late. No good going on thinking about it like this. It was now or never. *Now*. . . . Opening the door of his room, he stole out into the passage. Looked up and down. His mother was out; not a sound in the house. Even so, he instinctively tip-toed along the passage, down the stairs, into the Hall. No one here, either. He opened the Library door; the room was flooded in sun. Closing the door, drawing a deep breath, he ran to the writing-desk, opened the drawer, found the key, ran to the cupboard. Already sweating, his hand shook as his fingers failed to guide the key quickly into the lock. At last it was in. With the album in his arms, he darted across to the sofa; opened it. At sight of Great Britain—the line of Black Pennies, the page of spotless Edwards—his face grew hot, the colours ran into each other before his eyes. "Quick!" said a voice in his humming ears, and suddenly, like a madness, panic seized him. The trembling fingers tore at random over the page—two, three Black Pennies, the huge red Sovereign, Austria-Hungary Eagles, Mauritius, St. Helena, even the blue triangular Cape of Good Hope—all came tumbling out, scratched ruthlessly from their perfect squares, leaving behind them the marks of gum, proof-conclusive of their rape, upon the ravaged pages. . . .

That was enough. Like tiny mutilated feathers, they lay in a pile

on his lap. And as after an orgasm, the orgy ended with a long deflation of the distended lungs.

Shutting the book, his hand went over the pile, lifted the multi-coloured booty, and thrust it desperately into a pocket. Running to the cupboard, he dropped the album noisily on to its shelf, banged the door, locked it, threw the key into the drawer, and fled from the room.

Outside the house, he sprang over the railing into the field, turned sharp left into the wood, and ran headlong blindly through the trees.

II

He had them in a large envelope in his desk, invisible between the pages of a book. A whole week of school had passed, and not once had he gazed upon their beauty. Though the rare content of that envelope was constantly on his mind, diverting thought, preventing concentration, turning the darkness into a nightmare, and normal health to nervous exhaustion, yet he had not so much as once peered into the hiding-place to prove to himself the treasure still existed there.

As though to redeem this lack, twice in that week, in addition to the single compulsory Sunday letter, he had found himself writing to B.E.F. *France*. Though more difficult than ever to know what to say, an undeniable force insisted it should be done.

Nor had it been an easy week in other respects. On the second day, while doing verbal spelling with Old Wheeler, and while a row of Black Pennies were again leaping up and down before David's distracted mind, his name had come crashing into his ears. His body had jumped involuntarily, and before he knew it himself he had spelt Yacht in three letters—YOT. There was a clamour of laughter, and opening his desk, Old Wheeler had produced the famous rag doll and thrown it at him. " Dolly ! " cried the old man, and " Dolly ! " echoed the entire class. Since when the name had stuck to David with a fastness no fingers, however frenzied, could have torn away.

Like a fanned fire the nickname fled throughout the school, and David was neither old enough nor sufficiently popular to bear ridicule either with composure or indifference. The sting had drawn blood, and at school wounds are slow to heal. He was Dolly to everyone, even to those he had never known. From some he could tolerate the taunt ; from a few he could even welcome it, as a possible prelude to an ultimate, universal popularity. But here he soon found himself mistaken, for now boys even smaller than himself, witnessing what their elders did with impunity, were not to be denied this apparently facile sport, and joined in. Few men of any age can endure derision from their juniors, and David was no exception.

Of all his tormentors, the one whose jibes David found most difficult to tolerate were those of Levett. This boy was one of David's few precise contemporaries, and, so he had thought, the one friend on whom he might count to remain loyal. But in youth loyalty is neither easily, nor even wilfully, acquired. Possessions, rather, and of a concrete nature, are the more normal demand of the young. And at this time the most ambitious of Levett's desires in life was capable of being fulfilled for him, had Levett but known it, by none other than just him whom he so relentlessly persecuted.

Nor was David ignorant of this. Indeed, it was the first thought that sprang to his mind when the storm finally broke.

It broke on a Sunday morning, when the whole school was gathered in the Common Room, and David, having written one more filial letter to France, was absorbed in doing a jig-saw puzzle on his desk. This, too, he had all but brought to an end, when suddenly, from behind him, his desk-top was tipped up, and the puzzle scattered in hundreds of pieces on the floor.

Leaping to his feet, David swung round to find Levett's figure already out of reach. Standing at a distance, with a dozen grinning faces between himself and David, Levett then cried out in a simpering voice : " Little Dolly David doing his Nursery Puzzy-wuzzy ! "

Though smarting with anger under this new and inexcusable attack, David knew that to chase his tormentor was worse than useless. This decision taken, an idea immediately followed, to be but half-digested before promptly put into practice. Opening his desk, he withdrew the envelope from the book, found the faded blue Cape of Good Hope, thrust the envelope into his pocket, and heedless of the whole school's gaze, walked resolutely towards his persecutor.

When Levett began to retreat before his advance, David came to a halt ; but when the silence was broken by a derisive " Dolly ! " from Levett, David, with difficulty refraining from physical attack, shouted back with what sounded like absurd irrelevance : " You've a damned rotten stamp collection, anyway—silly fool ! "

Levett's reaction to this thrust surprised even David himself. Instead of a smile or snigger of contempt for such an apparently pointless remark, Levett drew himself up, clenched his fists, and came menacingly towards his one-time friend. But as he approached, all the venom he could find to blurt out was : " It's a damned sight better than yours, *Dolly !* "

" It's not ! " cried David, and as Levett seemed about to strike him, David held up in front of Levett's face the one faded blue Cape of Good Hope. " Look at that ! " he cried in exasperated triumph.

Levett did look. And his fists unclenched, and his jaw fell, as his eyes stared in amazement at what was held before him. His fingers went up to it, taking it from David's hand as though it were a small and breathing bird. He stood looking at it in the palm of his hand, while half the school gathered round, to gaze in awe at the one morsel of fragile paper.

" My Godfathers ! " breathed Levett. " The blue Cape of Good Hope ! " Then, turning, he faced its owner. " Where the hell did you get that ? "

Levett's eyes were on him ; fifty pairs of eyes, piercing his skull. " Where did you get it ? "

Tweed-and-tobacco ; skin like sand-paper on his cheek. Then the desecrated pages loomed up, as he gazed through them into his father's eyes.

" I found it," he muttered, while the heat mounted his neck.

" Found it ! " Levett was crying. " You can't *find* a thing like the blue Cape of Good Hope ! "

" In a cupboard—at home."

" Oh, look at Dolly blushing ! " a voice cried.

But amid the burst of mockery, Levett's whisper came suddenly urgent in his ear. " Look, Dave, I'll swop with you. What d'you want . . . ? "

" It's all right," David murmured. " You can have it."

Five minutes later, when all was quiet, and Levett and he together had picked up the scattered pieces of puzzle, David walked innocently over to the fireplace, drew an envelope from his pocket, looked at it for a moment with intense hatred, then threw it with careful carelessness into the flames.

JAMES STERN

THE SINGERS

I HEARD them singing in the shadow of sand
how years grow brittle as bread between our fingers,
and the immeasurable miles our garland.
They spoke to the lute with their five-tongued hands,
and I believed the singers.

First March ran over the lawns in gold and silver ;
and the wheel shook, and it was May ; then
every hour danced on a dulcimer
in citadels of air. After summer
came the thunder of wrath of men,

and days were poison into a clear glass,
coiling from the sky : love was power and terror.
And the heart knew them, tightened like a windlass,
dredging the horrible from unseen places
behind cloaks and mirrors.

Bent as a face watched in a water-bubble,
the sick year stood round us wearing ghosts ;
the ghosts called our thought in the voice of the bell :
could we remember March and not tremble ?
the singers, undistressed ?

I hear them singing, now in flame's shadow,
singing oh lies, lies : now they say
all is forgotten, was very long ago,
the garland was bright ashes, the bread mildew ;
and all, faded away.

T. R. TILLER

PLACE A DEFINITE ORDER WITH YOUR NEWSAGENT to ensure delivery of this paper

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"The Westerner," at the Royal
"Busman's Honeymoon," at the Empire

To the movie-critic going his rounds, plumbing the depths of entertainment, usually at the wrong time of day, a film here or there still rushes out of the blue. *The Grapes of Wrath* knocked every other film out of our heads for weeks, and still, at ten-thirty in the morning, interposes between the press-view eye and the object of its gazing. Perhaps that in itself is the explanation why at moments *The Westerner* brings Ford's masterpiece to mind, though one hopes that in Hollywood as well the lesson of realism has been felt. In *The Westerner*, at any rate, William Wyler (director of *Dead End* and *Wuthering Heights*) has turned on cowboys and sheriffs a new eye, backed even by flickers of a social conscience. The tussle between cattlemen and homesteaders who want land for their corn provides not only some magnificent shots of landscape and hard riding in Texas but also a clash of two ways of living. In the bible story Cain killed Abel, but here it is the tough herdsmen who fire the fields and houses of the crop-growers. The flames for once look real as well as exciting, bitterness and pathos appear in faces hitherto blithely lit by a rodeo. Not that *The Westerner* for an instant rivals the documentary magnificence of *The Grapes of Wrath;* it is a film of stars (Gary Cooper as tough and whimsical, as engagingly abashed as ever), the implications of the plot are sentimental; but it has the great merit of beating the westerns at their own thrills and of lifting this kind of film right out of its genre. As an example of Wyler's direction one might cite the comedy of the disreputable sheriff, in love with the image of Lily Langtree, and retaining shreds of dignity after the dirtiest action; the comedy, though exuberant, is never overdone, and Walter Brennan in the part is excellent.

Busman's Honeymoon has been changed too much from the original to satisfy Sayers fans, and it is hardly sprightly enough on its own account to compete with the Thin Man. Wimsey and Harriet have suffered most in the sea-change, robbed of their classical tags, their Meredithian sparring matches, their taste in cars and claret: in fact, Robert Montgomery and Constance Cummings remain gaily themselves in the parts. They are very charming and American, while the rest of the cast—including Sir Seymour Hicks as a decrepit Bunter—has been chosen for its sturdy Englishry; and the background of rustic accents, cottages, and leafy lanes is beautifully soothing. As detection, it is middling good in a land of make-believe; the comedy and queerness of the local characters contribute most to our enjoyment. For in a quiet way, it's not at all bad fun.

Correspondence

THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

SIR,—Now that the dust of the American political conventions has settled, and public opinion here begins to take sides more definitely, I should like to offer some criticism of the rather astonishing statements made by Prof. Laski in a recent article on the Democratic Convention.

Prof. Laski states that "up to almost the eve of the Convention, some of the President's most intimate friends were afraid that he could not even be 'drafted,' so strong was his personal preference for a return to private life." If this is the view of Mr. Roosevelt's most intimate friends, it is apparently shared by hardly anyone else in the country—even by those members of his own party who will vote for him. By maintaining silence concerning his intentions until a few hours before the Convention, the President effectively prevented any other member of the party from taking any steps to acquire a following and to come to Chicago with any sizable quantity of votes. If it be answered that this was made necessary in order that the President could retain control of the situation in Congress and in Europe, it may be said that if he had genuinely been desirous of returning to private life, he could well have stated that he would not discourage the candidature of other members of his party, and would not seek office for a third term unless the European situation should become critical by July. This would still have left the way open for re-nomination, and would have forestalled the accusation of disingenuousness which has been widely made throughout the country, and which has been a direct cause of the retirement of Mr. James Farley, the Postmaster General and Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, whose views against a third term were no secret.

Prof. Laski considers that Mr. Willkie may carry not more than about seven or eight states, which he names, adding "Beyond that figure, I think his hopes are small indeed." This is not the opinion of the present writer, who has been a resident and close observer of the political scene in America for the past fifteen years, and who is neither a Republican nor a Democrat. The Gallup poll, the accuracy of which has been highly praised by THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, showed as a first result a small majority for Willkie; this first poll was taken between the time of the Roosevelt nomination and Mr. Willkie's acceptance address at Elwood, Ind. A census of the press conducted by the *Editor and Publisher*, and made public on August 24th, shows that 66.3 per cent. of the daily press is backing Willkie, 20.1 per cent. Roosevelt, and 13.6 per cent. are either neutral or have as yet announced no choice. I think these figures cannot be written off by a belief that the national press is, by and large, the organ of the propertied classes.

Prof. Laski lists two handicaps to the Roosevelt candidature: the anti-third term tradition, and the intensity of the support which big business will give to Mr. Willkie. There is a third, familiar to all observers of politics, which is probably as strong as either of these, and that is the very human desire for a change, and a wish to see new personalities and new methods at work, which is all the more powerful because of Mr. Roosevelt's eight years' tenure of office, and which operates powerfully to affect the large, independent vote in the United States. Still a fourth handicap is a widespread feeling (whether justified or not, it is difficult for the layman to judge) that the administration has failed lamentably in respect to national armed preparedness, in spite of the fact that Mr. Roosevelt has been preaching the menace of Hitler for a long time and has had enormous general funds at his disposal, some of which could have been devoted to rearmament.

I think Prof. Laski underestimates the strength of the anti-third term tradition, which is here bound up with the quasi-sacred precedents set by Washington and Jefferson, and which is causing enormous defections among the right wing of the Democratic party. Unfortunately for the idea of the "necessity for Roosevelt," the Republicans point to the example of England in swapping Mr. Chamberlain for Mr. Churchill at a critical time in its affairs, and have just unearthed a statement made by Mr. Roosevelt himself in the campaign against Hoover to the effect that "no man is indispensable."

While it is understandable and praiseworthy that Mr. Roosevelt's friends should desire him to win, I think no useful purpose is served at this stage by overestimating his chances or by tagging the person of Mr. Willkie with the label of reactionary. This gentleman, whose nomination was something of a political miracle, appears to be a very capable and farsighted man, who has shown in his public pronouncements a very independent attitude towards the party traditions, and who has entered the campaign entirely free from political obligations. The Elwood speech, if undramatic, was refreshingly simple and sincere, and showed every evidence that the speaker appreciated the value of the vast New Deal reform programme. He was, in fact, attacked from some quarters in his own party for accepting so much of the Democratic programme and quarrelling chiefly with its methods. Prof. Laski knows well that it would be very difficult indeed in America to-day to set back the clock of social reform without the apparatus of force, an apparatus which is not at the time of writing in the possession of the Federal Government, although its abuse by individual States has been notorious in the past. The New Deal reforms are here to stay, not merely because they are recognised by the more enlightened Republicans as nothing more than the counterparts of the best European legislation, but because the whole relationship between people and Government has been entirely changed by the reformism of the Roosevelt administration. The best that the Republicans can do, if they achieve power, is to improve on the fiscal and administrative planning of the Democratic programme; the worst will, I think, show no great triumph for the now apologetic protagonists of "economic royalism."

68 Bank Street, LESLIE A. HYAM
New York.

POLES AND JEWS

SIR,—I find myself in complete agreement with the general trend of the argument in your correspondent's (Alfred Cunard) letter, although in his material grievance he is mistaken. The Joint Under-Secretary for War declared explicitly during the debate on the Allied Forces Bill that none of the Allied Governments was to have the power of compelling its nationals to join the army of their respective governments. Sir Edward Grigg added that special legislation would be required to provide the Allied Governments with such powers of compulsion. (House of Commons Official Report, Vol. 364, No. 106, page 1355.) But the importance of his letter lies in his general argument rather than in his particular grievance; and it is on the larger problem that I should like to add some comment.

When the new Polish Government was set up in France, the new Prime Minister of Poland declared that it was his intention to avoid and rectify the mistakes which had been made by the pre-war Polish administration. Every student of pre-war Poland knows that one of the major mistakes of that administration was the substitution of racial laws on the Nuremberg pattern for the social reforms which were long overdue in that feudal country. In other words, the Jews were the scapegoat for the sufferings of the Polish peasantry.

Now we are fighting for a new and better Europe in which tyranny and intolerance are to be banished. Every reasonable person will agree that in that better Europe peace and tolerance must also be extended to that unhappy people, the Jews. Yet not the entire Polish administration seemed to subscribe to those principles, and vague promises soon gave way to sad deeds. Within only a few months after the fall of Poland, which the Jews had most loyally helped to defend—if indeed testimony were needed, his Excellency the Polish Ambassador put this on record in one of his statements—we witnessed in the newly created Polish army in France anti-semitic outbursts which culminated in physical attacks on the racial minority. It was not until recently that these tendencies were checked by the Order of the Day issued by General Sikorski, which prohibited racial discrimination within the army. This order of the day shows that there are members of the Polish Government who deprecate these pre-war practices. On the other hand the Government seems to acquiesce to the publication of a weekly Polish, distinctly anti-semitic newspaper, in which contributions of two members of the Polish cabinet appeared recently. It is also a fact that the Polish daily which is sponsored by the Polish Government has defended its anti-semitic offspring; the latter incidentally gets its funds indirectly from the British taxpayer. We have also witnessed attempts to infuse into the British public the race hatred which unfortunately is so much practised by members of the Polish colony in this country. These people think it fit, even in the midst of the life-and-death struggle for their own future and the future of their tortured brethren in Poland, to continue their crusade of hatred against the Jews.

This is not only an internal problem of the Poles and the Jews; in the past race hatred has been the first, if unrecognised, symptom of an aggressive foreign policy—exactly the sort of policy we are trying to avoid in post-war Europe. The new Polish Government has now officially been recognised as an Ally of Great Britain, and as such we wish it well. But cannot enlightened British opinion put an end to activities which certainly do not augur for a better Europe of international good faith and tolerance?

Brasenose College, G. HIRSCH
Oxford.

SIR,—THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION has for years enjoyed among the progressive Poles the opinion of an excellent magazine truly representative

of British democracy, so it was with regret that I found in the pages of your last issue a letter, signed by Mr. A. Cunard, which contained unjustified allegations against the Poles. As a Pole and a Socialist it is my wish to protest emphatically against this misleading of British readers by Mr. Cunard. I have a right to do this as the Polish Socialist Party ("P.P.S.") has always fought uncompromisingly against anti-Semitism inspired by the Nazi Institute of Erfurt; not only were there thousands of Jewish workers among the members of the P.P.S., but our party also closely co-operated with the Jewish Socialist Party "Bund," which incidentally was laboriously opposed by Jewish reactionaries and Fascists. The Jewish problem in Poland was, as is generally known, singularly complicated. The idea of creating a Jewish "reserve" in Lublin was, as so many other ideas, not originally invented by Hitler. The Tsarist Government tried, many years before Hitler, to create such a reserve in Russian Poland for the Jews expelled from Russia proper. The result of this was that the Polish Republic inherited an enormous Jewish minority which, owing to the over-population on the land and the extreme poverty of the Jews, it was not in the position to absorb. Nazi agents took advantage of this situation to instigate anti-Jewish feeling in Poland. But I can state categorically and authoritatively that every Polish democrat, socialist worker, and radical peasant opposed strongly this humiliating movement. We fought energetically against any encroachment of Nazi methods on Polish life, just as our Jewish comrades fought against the Jewish reactionaries, who, seeking larger profits, were short-sighted enough to support the Fascist Government of Smigly-Rydz and Beck.

The Polish refugees here are but a reflection of public opinion at home, and the Polish Government and the Army are symbols of the indomitable will of the nation to carry on the struggle for the liberation of Poland. The declaration of the Polish Prime Minister, General Sikorski, and the very presence in the Government and in the Polish National Council of Socialist members demonstrate that the future Poland will be a land of democracy, equality and social justice.

True enough, a certain number of anti-Semites and Fascists have found their way into the circle of Polish refugees. They have even begun to publish a paper of their own. But the indignation of the Polish Left and the authorities was so great that these gentlemen were forced to restrain their harmful activities. It is also a fact that isolated cases of anti-Semitism existed in the Polish Army—but the energetic attitude of the Commander-in-Chief and of the soldiers themselves prevented their recurrence.

It is wrong to generalise where only isolated incidents exist, and Mr. A. Cunard is guilty of such an unjustified generalisation. Had the Polish Government released the Jews from performing their military duty, as the German and Italian Governments have done—then, indeed, a just cause for indignation would have been provided.

When insulting the Poles, Mr. Cunard should bear in mind that every hour of the day Polish airmen are risking their lives in the defence of Britain. D. S.

P.S.—I refrain from signing my full name for fear of possible consequences for my family, which has remained in Poland.

RUMANIA'S PEASANTS

SIR,—I wonder why the writer of your article on the Transylvanian transfer considers that in the present situation in Rumania a *social* revolution is a possibility. I entirely agree with the writer that it is a nice question whether as a political structure Hungary or Rumania is the more reactionary or corrupt, but as far as their social structure is concerned there is a contrast. Socially, as regards income distribution and class privilege, Rumania is more democratic, owing to the agrarian reforms which followed the last war: even if in politics the peasantry are nearly as powerless as they are in Hungary, yet the greater part of the land is in their hands. In Hungary the greater part of the land is owned by capitalist farmers or the very large landowners, while half the population is landless, working on starvation wages on the big estates and living on a far lower level than the productivity of the land would allow. It is only in Hungary, alone of East European countries, that the feudal aristocracy is still a ruling *class* in the true sense of the term, and it is only in Hungary therefore that the conditions for social revolution really exist. Elsewhere in the Balkans feudalism is almost extinct, while capitalism has not evolved: there are ruling cliques or gangs, highly unstable except in so far as they are financed from outside, and liable to be upset by any *coup d'état*, without causing any significant social change. The growth of rural poverty in the past twenty years has not been due to class oppression and will not be remedied by any class revolution.

Consequently, from the standpoint of the peasant population of Transylvania the transfer must mean a return to feudalism, since the Magyar landowners will no doubt claim their estates again, as the expropriated German landowners of Czechoslovakia did after the Sudeten occupation. Russia's acquiescence in the transfer has made agrarian revolution in Hungary—where it is desperately needed—a far more remote possibility than it was when the Nazis were using the peasants' land hunger as a means of propaganda. Any unrest which Stalin may be able to foment in Rumania or elsewhere in the Balkans is of very minor importance beside this essential fact. DOREEN WARRINER

28b Belsize Park Gardens,
London, N.W.3.

FIFTH COLUMN

SIR,—The following melodrama took place on September 6th, 1940:

Scene: Public House, Ashton-under-Lyne, near Manchester.

Time: 9.30 p.m., Friday night.

Young man called Bill is busy imbibing cider and writing a letter. Enter burly man in bowler hat with bulging eyes. Peers over Bill's shoulder. Bill draws women holding huge mugs of beer with owls on their heads. Their faces seen through the glass mugs might look like plans of military importance. Bill writes sensational spy message to counteract incessant talk about Bombs. Burly man in bowler hat produces Special Constable badge and takes Bill to Police Box. Earnest young P.C. makes urgent phone call. Black Maria takes all three to Police Station. Burly man in bowler hat says to Bill, "I watched you. See, I ordered a glass of beer but I didn't drink it!" (Triumphant gleam in bulging eyes. Such self-sacrifice for His Country.)

Melodrama maintained in Police Station. Bill searched, kept 2 hours in bare room with hard chairs while detectives rush off to search Bill's house. Detectives return to practise third degree methods on poor, weary, sober Bill. Bill insists letter is merely flippant parody of war mania. Detectives shout, "Come on; what is the Code?" Bill insists there is no code. How could there be to "Imperative despatch Baron B. plan immediately Krampff"? Detectives not satisfied. Continue:

'Tecs: Are you a member of the Oxford Movement?

Bill: No.

'Tecs: Do you know what we mean by the Oxford Movement?

Bill: No.

'Tecs: So you've had nothing to do with the Oxford Movement?

Bill: No.

'Tecs: Then you do know what we mean by the Oxford Movement—the Buchmanites?

Bill: I know what the Oxford Group is, if that's what you mean. I've had nothing to do with it, nothing whatever. I've not heard it described as the Oxford Movement.

'Tecs: Oh, we stand corrected. (Pause for slight sneer.) Were you a member of any group while you were at Birmingham Univsersity?

Bill: I was a member of the Socialist Club.

'Tecs: THAT IS THE OXFORD GROUP!

Bill (astonished): Of course it's not!

'Tecs: YES IT IS!

Bill: NO IT'S NOT!

This was not all. The sleuth hounds had other cards up their sleeves. Bill was anxious to have his property returned and to go home.

Bill: Can I have my two £1 notes please?

'Tecs: Are you accusing anyone of taking your money? (Turns to Police Constable) Has he been accusing anyone of taking his money while we were away?

P.C. verifies that the notes were taken from Bill's jacket while he went to the lavatory.

'Tecs: What do you know about the New British Broadcasting Station?

Bill: Only what I have read in the papers.

'Tecs: What is the wavelength?

Bill: I don't know.

'Tecs: What was on those £1 notes about the New British Broadcasting Station?

Bill: I don't know, I haven't looked. I've just taken them from my pay envelope. The detectives then produce the notes and hold them in front of Bill with a playful grin.

Bill: What *is* on them about the New British Broadcasting Station?

'Tecs: Oh nothing. It was just a trick.

They released Bill at 2 a.m. on Saturday morning and he was drawing for Government engineering contracts at 8.30 a.m. At 12.30 he was writing to the M.P. for the district about the occurrence.

It seems to me that these would-be Gestapo merchants could be far more usefully employed in some other capacity, such as furnace stokers in a munitions factory, or carpenters fitting sleeping accommodation in air-raid shelters, instead of annoying and attempting to intimidate people who still retain a sense of humour in the midst of the horrors of this war. BILL CREW, B.Sc.

69 Brendon Drive,
Audenshaw, Manchester.

REFUGEES

SIR,—It would be of great advantage if a new category of exemption for interned refugees was added to the recently issued White Paper. Number 19 might read "persons entitled to exemption under the above provisions to *be* exempted."

As honorary secretary of a Church refugee committee I made an application for one of our trainees, aged 18, recently transported to Canada. His case is covered by *two* of the categories in the new White Paper, numbers 4 and 5 (A.W.S. permit at time of internment and permission of local Chief Constable to live in a protected area.) He is a "C" refugee, well known to us, of excellent character, and a firm is waiting to employ him as a toolmaker, yet I have received a letter from the Home Office to say that the application has been refused.

Now it is quite true that the application should have been made by the firm and not by myself, but this is not the reason given. No reason is given. The note says: "I am directed by the Secretary of State to say that he has considered your representations but regrets that in present circumstances he is unable to order his release."

It would be interesting to know what "in the present circumstances" means. The fact that the boy has been sent to Canada? But Mr. Peake, speaking for the Secretary of State in the House of Commons on August 6th expressly stated that "exactly the same conditions [for release] will apply in the Dominions as are applicable here." I have heard of similar refusals to grant an exemption where the case is fully covered by a category, and I am wondering now whether the White Paper is merely an academic document, or if it is to be taken seriously. At present the only people who seem to have been released are sick people who ought never to have been interned at all, if the Police had carried out the instructions of the Home Office, and whose presence must have been a great embarrassment to the authorities in the internment camps. EILEEN LEACH.

Lyndhurst Road Church Refugee Committee,
80 Antrim Mansions, N.W.3.

100,000,000 ALLIES—IF WE CHOOSE

SIR,—May I draw attention in your columns to the very difficult position in which many German-born wives of British subjects now find themselves? The short-sighted policy of the Government and the wholesale internment of "enemy aliens," the vast majority of whom are strongly friendly to the British cause both for idealistic and material reasons, have identified all persons of German descent with Nazidom in the public eye, including even those who, like myself, are fortunate enough to possess British nationality.

If German-born British subjects are compelled to work for their living, they are now faced in their search for employment not only with the prejudices of individual employers, but with the fact that firms executing Government orders are not permitted to employ them. I have lost my employment as a result of the war, and the difficulties in the way of my finding other employment seem insurmountable. Agencies shrug their shoulders or regard me with suspicion; Government offices, who could use my capacities, politely regret ("the Treasury would not permit"), etc. Warm personal recommendation from British-born subjects of high standing ensure politeness, but no more.

I have a long record of active political opposition to Hitler, dating from a time when the people of this country had hardly heard his name, but now that this country is actually fighting Hitler, I am excluded from the struggle as unreliable and treated as a second-class citizen—often by people who not so long ago thought Hitler a very good fellow.

It is not merely that I can obtain no employment, but my husband finds that the atmosphere changes perceptibly immediately the authorities are informed that his wife was German-born, with the result that his prospects of obtaining suitable employment are about as bright as mine.

There is my son, too, educated in the spirit of the struggle against Nazidom; in Germany he found he had a "wrong father" in Nazi eyes and had to suffer for it; now here he finds he has a "wrong mother" and may have to suffer for that too.

This is not an individual case—it is the British version of the Nazi hunt after the "Jewish grandmother." People are still judged by their racial origin rather than by their records, although this "war of peoples and causes" cuts right across the convenient old categories. Apparently the authorities still prefer to sort out friends and foes according to birth-places; the convenience of the method seems in their eyes to outweigh the fact that it discourages our friends and encourages our enemies.

The present situation is intolerable; to win this war the British people need *all* their friends. They can have friends literally by the million, but only if Great Britain's political leaders radically change their attitude in this question of the treatment of "aliens." GERMAN-BORN BRITISH SUBJECT

THE SWASTIKA

SIR,—In answer to Sir Philip Hartog's question to me, I think if he will be good enough to read my sentence again, he will see that it is absolutely precise. I said that "it is an interesting fact that Kipling, the most distinguished advocate of the Public School as a breeder of little Führers, thirty years before Hitler realised the significance of the swastika as an emblem." I said simply the significance of the swastika as *an* emblem. What its significance was, I haven't the faintest idea; but then I also haven't the faintest idea of what its significance is to Hitler. LEONARD WOOLF

SIR,—Mr. Woolf will find Sir Philip Hartog's account of this Aryan symbol more fully explained by Georges Clemenceau in *Au Soir de la Pensée*. Indian scholars had told him that the cross with rectangular hooks represented the felloe of the Wheel in movement and symbolised the culminating point of the Buddhist and then Brahmin doctrine of eternal metempsychosis. It was said to have come to India from Greece and travelled thence to China and Japan. Kipling adopted it, of course, as an emblem of the eternal succession of life and certainly not of totalitarian leadership.

ALEX. M. THOMPSON

MR. GREENWOOD

SIR,—I am directed to protest against your article entitled "Get On or Get Out," It is a blatant attack on a man you utterly fail to understand. You ask "has anyone settled the relative importance of munitions and machinery exports, or of consumers and the claims of the home market?" The answer is definitely "Yes." Thanks to Mr. Greenwood. We in the industrial world of the North could tell you of mills and factories which have changed their machinery. Changed their materials. Changed their trade formations and home and foreign contacts. Trained their own labour. Absorbed all the local labour supply available, at Greenwood's official request. Obviously the claims of the Services must come first. Our export trade is also a fighting unit in the economic sense and there is complete unity between the orders of Greenwood and Dr. Dalton in this respect.

You say that "Greenwood has done nothing effective." The answer is that, if you knew what we know you would quickly change your tune. You add that Greenwood "has failed to insist on a proper co-ordination of departmental policies in terms of a comprehensive economic plan." Primarily it is not his job. That is the job of the Government. Greenwood has done his share, and more than his share, in determining that policy. We have evidence of it in the North in a score of ways.

You continue with the words "The Labour Movement and the whole country is growing impatient of Mr. Greenwood's easy going pace. He should make way for a colleague who can do his job." These words constitute a stab in the back of a man who has done some remarkably clever work for the country.

Trade Unions have sacrificed most of their rules to fit in with the Greenwood plan. All our sacrifices have been noted. They are filed for reference. As for a comprehensive economic plan for the future, you can trust the Unions through the T.U.C. and the Labour Movement through the Parliamentary Labour Party to look after that part of the business in the future. Our first job is to win the war. Greenwood is doing a difficult job in magnificent manner. The work of Bevin and Morrison and the rest is but a part of his directing. Get to know the facts before you attack again a man who is bigger than you care to admit. I suggest that you read his record as the Minister of Health. Even the biggest critic in the country is bound to admit the "comprehensive nature" of that record. You cannot spoil that. (Councillor) H. EASTWOOD,
57 Ardwick Green North, General Secretary,
Manchester, 12. Rubber, Cable and Asbestos Workers.

[We paid willing tribute to Mr. Greenwood's services and abilities. We urged and we still urge that he is not to-day in his right office.—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

ALLENBY

SIR,—Having served throughout the Palestine campaign, I was much interested in the review of General Wavell's book on Allenby. I think critics of the Third Gaza Operations are inclined to forget—especially in these mechanised days—what extraordinary difficulties we had with supply. For instance, during the advance on Jerusalem through the rocky and almost roadless Judaean Hills, our first-line transport consisted of pack mules and camels. The latter, good enough though painfully slow, in Sinai were a real handicap in rough country and wet weather. Supply difficulties certainly hindered a rapid advance necessary to decisive victory then. I am sure that without Allenby's extensive re-organisation in the summer of 1917 no advance could have been successfully undertaken. In April, 1917, after two reverses, which, rightly or wrongly, we put down to inefficient staff work, we were dispirited and had lost all faith in the Higher Command. Allenby came, moved G.H.Q. from the fleshpots of Egypt to the desert, and by his own presence and vigorous personal influence restored morale and inspired us with complete confidence in himself, a confidence which he never lost. Critics should also remember that the offensive would have been resumed early in 1918, after the winter rains, had not the transfer of troops to France made its postponement inevitable.

Poole House, M. R. LE FLEMING,
Durham. late M.G.C.

HEIL HUNGER!

SIR,—*Heil Hunger!* by Dr. Gumpert was published in America some months before we issued it over here. During that period it was consistently praised on both sides of the Atlantic and no-one questioned its accuracy. The charges which Dr. William Brend makes are most serious and call for immediate investigation. We have sent a copy of *The Nineteenth Century* to the American publishers so that Dr. Gumpert may have an opportunity of replying. If he fails to substantiate his statements we shall, of course, withdraw the book. In any case we shall not reprint it until the points at issue have been settled.

40 Museum Street, STANLEY UNWIN
London, W.C.1

FOR RICHER, FOR POORER

SIR,—After twenty years of benevolent privation bestowed by Peace, the poor, once again bearing magnificently the brunt of War, are now having their ramshackle homes pounded to rubble. At the same time as these monuments to our incompetence are being so noisily destroyed, advertisements like the following continue to appear daily in the *Times*, "Wanted, Butler; good reference, not less than five years one place; one in family, eight in staff; wages £110." (10th Sept.).

Even if the Emergency Powers Act has to remain a polite fiction cannot these individuals be forbidden to publicise so openly and indecently their aristocratic indifference? RICHARD M. TITMUSS
82 St. George's Drive, S.W.1.

WHETHER you use a "cut-throat" or a "safety," you can't do better than stick to Parke-Davis, the shaving cream that both softens the beard and protects the skin. Your chemist sells large 1s. 6d. tubes.

PARKE-DAVIS
Shaving Cream

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

"I cannot say the crow is white
But needs must call a spade a spade"

wrote Humphrey Gifford in the sixteenth century and, with those lines, started one more good metaphor on a course of dull damnation which, in this instance, has lasted nearly four centuries. In Mr. Eric Partridge's *Dictionary of Clichés* (Routledge, 7*s.* 6*d.*) the phrase is starred as one of the "particularly objectionable." Among the three thousand clichés which, with morbid if useful industry, he has collected in this book, there are several which seem to me far more objectionable. The spade cliché has for me very nearly the merit of a proverb and I like it almost as much as "a stitch in time." There is one phrase I can think of which is very much worse. I mean the father of all clichés, "to coin a phrase," the very password to the lowlands of mediocrity. It is missing, I think, from Mr. Partridge's list.

His book is amusing, instructive, valuable and it is published at the right moment. If the first casualty in war is truth, the second is language, its vehicle. War silences many professional writers and the trade of writing gets into the hands of the amateurs. Hundreds of them are now writing official reports, setting out technical opinions. There is what they would call "a crying need" for a quiet hour with Mr. Partridge. And with Mr. Fowler too. But the amateurs are, after all, only copying the professionals. From to-day's *Times* I see that there is "a gnashing of teeth" in the countries of the Axis, that elsewhere people are "turning a willing ear" to Hitler's "blandishments," that something or other is "foredoomed to fail" and has been "greeted with blank amazement," that it is not my duty but my "bounden duty" to save. Language of this kind deadens its own arguments by over-emphasis. The ear is deafened, the mind enters an hypnotic state and passes into sleep. In time of war, this may be the writer's desire. Even if it is not, the strain of war upon the mind is such that we write out of the shallow top drawer of consciousness where little but the echoes of what other people have said, and how they have said it, is contained. We feel a need for a ready supply of accepted eloquence and an instinct in us prefers the united lowing of the herd to the bother and danger of thinking for ourselves. Such necessities put language into uniform and it is with a sense of merit that we call, in these times, upon the glum standing army of the tried and hackneyed.

Mr. Eric Partridge fills 260 pages with these short cuts to style. To many he has put the date. Thus, he tells us, "a matter of life and death" became a cliché in the middle of the nineteenth century. "A place in the sun" derives from Pascal, "Ma place au soleil," but does not become a cliché until about 1880, with the rise of Germany. The plague in "to avoid like the plague" is the bubonic plague and dates from the late nineteenth century. The orgy of "kicking against the pricks" had been slowly coming on from the time of Acts IX. 5, became greater between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the ox was the draught animal of Europe, and broke out fully in the late eighteenth century. Box and Cox has been going since 1847. "Came the . . ." as in "came the dawn" did not arrive, according to Mr. Partridge, until 1936. (I thought it was earlier.) By 1920 the "heel of Achilles" was obsolescent, a hint of the decline in classical education. Much research has been put into his book, but I wonder what evidence supports some of Mr. Partridge's dating and how much is personal impression. One point is very noticeable: that the majority of his clichés date from the nineteenth century and he makes the interesting suggestion that the rise of the cliché follows the decline of the proverb. The cliché is middle-class culture ejecting the popular and aristocratic cultures of the folk and the court.

A comparison of the humorous dialogue in *Don Quixote*, where Sancho Panza's irony is usually in the form of proverbs, with (for example) the dialogue of P. G. Wodehouse, which is generally in the clichés of middle-class slang, seems to support Mr. Partridge's opinion; but in *Don Quixote*, the class war between the cliché and the proverb is already on. Cervantes pokes fun at the "rosy fingered dawns" of the romances of chivalry. Don Quixote's high-sounding stone-dead clichés of chivalry and the Court are riddled by Sancho's low-class proverbs. But if it is true, as some people think, that popular cultures are the discarded or conquered cultures of an educated class, phrases of our time like "the open road," "immense strides," "the shape of things to come," "the spirit of the troops is excellent," may be shaped into proverbs. Soldiers are expert in using clichés in a humorous sense and the path of the cliché to proverbial use is by way of humour. An ironical sentry in my neighbourhood always interrupts the more talkative of our Home Guard with, "Shall I tell you about my African experiences?" I can imagine an adaptation of that eventually in a book of English proverbs.

Many people with simple, clear and individual minds throw away their individuality and use clichés when they have to write. They fear the simple will be ineffective in print; yet it is the desire to be original which makes everyone alike. In his modesty the amateur writer wishes above all to conform. The cliché, like the dinner jacket, is a quick way to respectability. Pile Pelion on Ossa and the butlers of culture at once let you in to the party. To the public speaker clichés give assurance. They are so many buttons he can press with fore-knowledge of the response; "the supreme sacrifice," "the malice of the enemy," "a just and humane settlement": words like these have associations so familiar that they stir us without disturbing us. "The young airman made the supreme sacrifice"—good politics. Some of the glory of that sacrifice is, by cultural association, shared by us; we are flattered by being thought worthy of eloquence, and only half face the fact. "The young airman died"—dangerous politics; we face the fact. We feel, as he did, individual, alone. We ask a question. The larger the audience the more difficult to speak with precision, and again, the more dangerous. Hence the clichés of Royal speeches which are written to induce a general state of tranquillity. Mr. Partridge has discovered these beautiful ones, spoken to the Empire on July 8th, 1939:

> I hope that this historic occasion will be the beginning of a new era when agriculture will come into her own.'

With a sigh of pleasure a whole Empire passes into sleep at the abracadabra of the chief magician.

Mr. Partridge's *Dictionary* persuades one to make puritanical vows against the use of clichés. Seeing these pieces of cultural bric-a-brac standing without the mercy of context, one laughs and shivers. Some, like the classical tags, the Biblical echoes, the proverbs that have somehow failed to become completely proverbial, have the pathos of an antique shop's trifles; others, the business man's time-saving device, have the horror of superseded gadgets, the outmoded pencil sharpener, the dated cigar cutter or machine for sharpening razor-blades. One is shocked to see that one's own mind has its lumber; even more shocked to see how much one's mind is filled not only with other people's thoughts but with their manner of thinking. It is like discovering that one is wearing somebody else's false teeth. Yet as one winces and swears to write pure English in the future, one also rebels. The attraction of the cliché is its familiarity and, to the familiar, one warms. The use of the cliché gives one the pleasures of quotation—the subtlest of literary pleasures—and familiar quotation has an honest worth about it. We use the cliché to show off; but it saves us from showing off too much. There is a snob-value in the Ides of March—I, too, have read my *Julius Caesar*—a kind of middling, democratic solidarity in joining that large group of income-tax payers who, in the golf clubs of the angry twenties, used to warn the government against "killing the goose that lays the golden egg"; and memories of Italian tenors crying out their top-notes like cockerels among the olives make one last go at *con amore* a matter of irresistible sentiment. A good deal depends (cliché) on the tone of the voice inside the mind when one speaks or writes the offending sentence (cliché again). "The bonds of matrimony," as Mr. Eric Partridge says, is sound English if one is serious, an atrocity if one is humorous; "deus ex machina" is so useful, especially to critics, that it is degraded, I think, only by an inadequate context. A flimsy context makes even an original metaphor ridiculous. The dangerous periods in the life of a phrase are its periods of notoriety—cf. Kipling's "white man's burden"—and especially its set middle age; in old age it can be revived very happily by ironical use. When Lytton Strachey wrote of "the nefarious dealings" of the Khedive in *Eminent Victorians* he was maliciously stealing a cliché from Victorian melodrama to describe a piece of Victorian corruption and enjoying the naughty and subversive pleasures of hidden quotation and the secret inverted comma.

Journalists, particularly writers on politics and sport, lead us in the use of clichés. Writing in haste, their minds jaded by too much writing, they find it easiest to write other people's sentences. As a journalist Ramsay Macdonald had an awful prose style which was full of the spurious coinage which Mr. Partridge has collected. It is said that the political journalists are not interested in how they write but in what they write and that they use the hackneyed because it is the convenient dialect of the educated. But a comparison of the prose of the leading articles in the *Mirror*, the *Express*, for example, with those of the *Times* is greatly to the disadvantage of the latter, which is written for the educated. In its "leaders" the style of the popular press at its best approaches the plain English of Defoe and Cobbett—and Defoe's was called "Kitchen English" by the high-brows of his time, while the educated press is still weighed down by the dead inheritance of the latinised Augustans—a style which, as a glance at Mr. Wodehouse's Jeeves soon shows, has now become the language of footmen.

V. S. PRITCHETT

CRITIC OF STALIN

Stalin's Russia and the Crisis in Socialism. By MAX EASTMAN. *Allen and Unwin.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

It is not necessary to agree with even the major part of Mr. Eastman's book to say at once that it is both important and illuminating. In form it is two things, an indictment of the shape of the Soviet Union under Stalin, and a plea for a reconsideration of Socialist foundations.

The first is, I think, more successful than the second. On any showing, there have been massive crimes and blunders in the Stalin period, many of them directly traceable to the needs implicit in Stalin's fight for personal power. Mr. Eastman collects these together and by refusing to consider anything but them, he is able to draw a picture of the Soviet Union as one of unrelieved brutality, the natural ally

of Hitler and Mussolini, whose crimes, he thinks, have been outdistanced by Stalin. The liquidation of the Kulaks, the great purges, the "disease of orthodoxy," as the Webbs calls it, are the main counts in his indictment. He dismisses the Constitution of 1936 as a myth, and insists that the party-bureaucracy is the sole effective power in the Soviet Union to-day.

I believe that there is solid ground for many of Mr. Eastman's claims; but I believe, also, that the weakness of his case is the absence of any sense of proportion in his estimate. It is true to say that Stalin and his associates have done unforgivable things, and that many of them derive—not least the purges—from his lust for personal power. But the balance of the account seems to me to omit factor after factor of which discussion is imperative in any serious estimate. All that Mr. Eastman has to say the friends of the Soviet Union ought to take into account; much that he ought to say is simply not there. Not a little of his discussion is warped by the anger that he naturally feels as a disappointed enthusiast who has seen so many of his hopes go wrong, or, as he would say, betrayed. The fact is that history does not follow the straight lines within which Mr. Eastman would have wished the Revolution to confine itself. He takes no account of the backward state of the U.S.S.R. when the Revolution began—he does not seek to measure the immense impact of the international position upon the Revolution. He does not realise the significance of the time-factor in the whole. Nor does he seek to enquire what gains have resulted from the immense process—itself part of a world process—that has been started. And there is absent from his account any realisation of what I think it is fundamental to understand—that only security from without can break bureaucratic tyranny from within, and that this security cannot be achieved so long as the destruction of the U.S.S.R. is a main objective, direct or indirect, of the forces of privilege throughout the world.

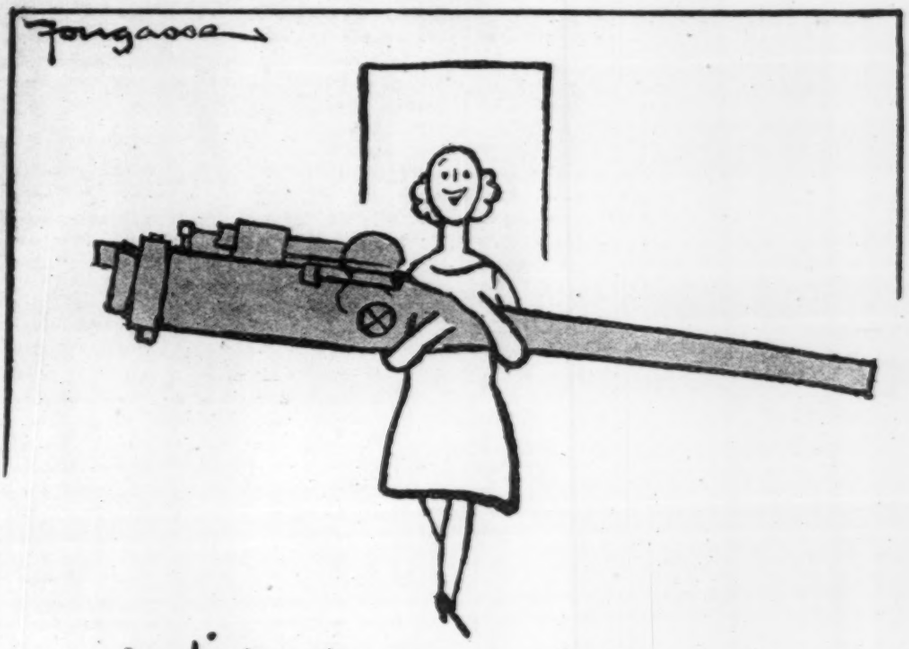
The second part of Mr. Eastman's book is too slight to bear the weight of the immense conclusions implicit in his argument. It is full of common sense when it pleads for a flexible and humanistic approach to the problems of socialism. It is wise and valuable when it protests at the attempt to make Marxism a body of rigid dogma untouchable by historic developments in thought. But it suffers from the fact that it is an indication of Mr. Eastman's temperamental longings rather than an analysis of the historic forces in which we are involved. The result is that its utility mainly consists in detached *obiter dicta* rather than in a continuous chain of reasoning. Many of the *obiter dicta* are admirable in themselves; but even the aphorisms of so attractive a mind as Mr. Eastman's do not constitute a philosophy.

HAROLD J. LASKI

THOMAS HARDY

Selected Poems of Thomas Hardy. By G. M. YOUNG. *Macmillan.* 5s.

Mr. G. M. Young deserves a great deal of respect, and his introduction makes nearly all the points about Hardy with warmth and without over-praise. That the Romantic "Titanism" had become "simply disapproving" is an excellent phrase. He does not bring out the flat contradictions which are the most irritating feature of Hardy's philosophy; but then, some monism like Hardy's seems to me probably true, so what irritates me must be in the treatment not in the belief. Probably it is the complacence of the man, which saw no need to try to reconcile the contradictions; the same complacence which could be satisfied with a clumsy piece of padding to make a lyric out of a twaddling reflection. No doubt



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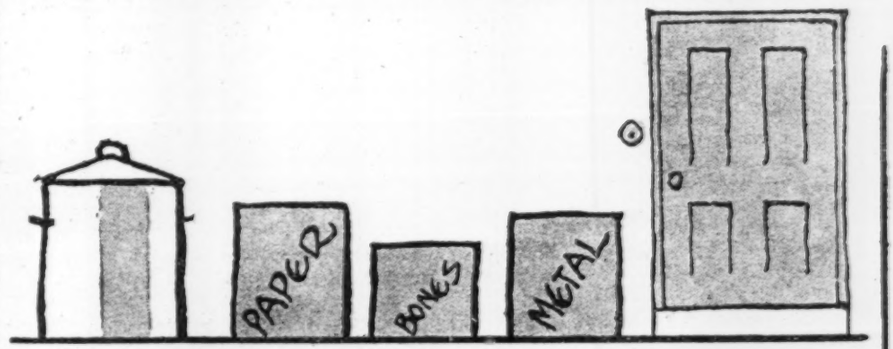

"UP HOUSEWIVES AND AT 'EM!"

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he needed this quality to win through as he did. Most people who are admired for "unpretentious integrity" have it.

Plodding through the "Collected Poems" I marked about ten that really ought to be in any selection. Mr. Young had let in two of them. He has left out "After a Journey" (Hither I come to view a voiceless ghost) and "The Voice" (last line "and the woman calling") and "Who's in the next room?" and "A Broken Appointment" and "The Sleepwalker" (where the philosophy comes off for once). Instead we have several long ill-written anecdotes and a good deal from *The Dynasts*. It is a pity, because a working selection from Hardy's mass of bad poetry is much needed.

I suspect that Mr. Young's views on rhythm in poetry, which I don't understand, are somewhere at the back of it. Some while ago he published an essay saying that the innovations of modern poetry were destroying the very basis of English verse rhythm, the root itself from which poetry might have flowered in the future, and the example he took of this final rotting was:

> Down arterial roads, riding in April.

You would think that this gay and clear line would suggest Horace to a classicist more than ultimate corruption. Then he wrote an essay on Miltonic scansion, which he clearly felt might be a bit unadventurous but gave the normal sane view. The four or five lines which he scanned as examples seemed to me totally impossible. Maybe the scansion marks were misprinted. Very likely he has some special way of reading aloud.

Sure enough, in the introduction here, we are told that Hardy's choice of words is often clumsy, but his impeccable merit is his wonderful rhythm. Now there is a quality in Hardy easiest called good rhythm, though it might be called a certain clumsiness that fits his grim scenery. Or rather it is a closeness to the accent of spoken English won through indifference to the poetic conventions of his time. For instance the line:

> And a pond edged with grayish leaves,

But the good poem of which this is the last line only gets into Mr. Young's introduction, as an example of Hardy as an imitator: "any young man who had read Browning and Swinburne might have written it." Swinburne my foot. In the poems selected it seems to me that Hardy often simply drops his rhythm, as a child drops its rattle and stares before it straight at the skyline, dribbling slightly. He can, to be sure, "beat his music out":

> None answered. That she'd done poor John a cruel turn thought we.

Mr. Young's claim for this bit of rhythm, and for many like it, seems to be that Hardy was deliberately imitating dialect ballads. In his enthusiasm for this "ancient music," Mr. Young harks back to the troubadours. They are quoted in comparison with the rhythm of *The Dynasts*, the greatest example of Hardy's "singular purity of rhythm," in which "every measure is handled with equal aptness and assurance." Many of the selections from it deal with the World Will, which is actively malevolent whenever Hardy chooses to give us a good dig but otherwise wholly unconscious though described as half-conscious:

> Heaving dumbly
> As we deem
> Moulding numbly
> As in dream.

How the very hindquarters of the bewildered mammoths loom through the bog! The words echo in the mind, as we critics say, rumbling humbly in a team or stumbling tumbly to a gleam.

It is quite true, as Mr. Young says, that you come back to the few good poems of Hardy as to a source; you want their honesty and find their beauty. And I am very sorry to have to be rude to Mr. Young, one of our few valuable literary critics. But there it is, a man coming back to Hardy does want to find the good ones.

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IN THE NAME OF GLORY

Married Life in an African Tribe. By I. SCHAPERA. *Faber and Faber.* 15s.

The Swazi. By BRIAN ALLAN MARWICK. *Cambridge University Press.* 18s.

These studies of two South African tribes have fortunately been brought within the reach of the general reader (though in style and matter somewhat specialist), for the problems they deal with are of ever-growing interest. Dr. Schapera limits his study to the family life of the Kgatla of Bechuanaland, which he submits to a minute scrutiny; while Mr. Marwick aims at giving a complete picture of the social, political, legal and economic life of the Swazi, with some fascinating information on medicine and magic, but unfortunately none on poetry or stories, and only vague indications as to the nature of their dancing. This evidence, from an administrator and a professor of ethnology is all the more valuable for its lack of any expressed personal bias. For it is clear that both these writers envisage with a like deep dismay the dwindling of native tradition in face of the changes produced by European occupation with its retinue of missions, new markets and taxation.

The Kgatla are further advanced on the path of "progress" and tribal disintegration, owing to the conversion of their Chief in 1892, and the adoption of Christianity as the tribal religion. To summarise Dr. Schapera's conclusions: the Church is responsible for the decay of polygamy and other marriage practices, as also for the abolition of the ancient ceremonies connected with the initiation of an age-regiment, so that though the regimental organisation still flourishes what was a powerful force for discipline in the old Kgatla life has disappeared. And what has the Church contributed to Kgatla culture? It has built churches, introduced Church ceremonies and holidays, "developed new forms of marriage and death ritual, and through its hymns provided a new form of music." It has tried to impose Protestant ideas of morality, has only too successfully introduced European clothing, and taught the women knitting and sewing. But it appears that the missionary's insistence on monogamy has only salved his own conscience. The net result of suppressing polygamy has been the growth of prostitution. Again, the suppression by government of the public "smelling-out" of a sorcerer among the Swazi has also not had the expected result:

> The fact that natives do not regard it as possible to bring a sorcerer to book by an ordinary trial was overlooked. As a consequence sorcery has increased in its forms and extent until the natives maintain that more people now die by witchcraft than ever died from bloodshed in pre-European days.

Heavy taxation (for a Protectorate must be made to pay) plays a most important part in the disintegration of tribal life. Instead of joining his age-regiment, and sharing its responsibilities and privileges, the taxpayer must go out to find employment, in gold-mines or sugar-plantations, as agricultural labourer, domestic servant or government employee. He returns with a preference for European foodstuffs and clothes, for ballroom dancing and the gramophone, and may have even added the works of Marie Stopes to his library.

Mr. Marwick has a short paragraph entitled "Language," in which he enumerates the words which have enriched the Swazi language as the result of contact with Europeans. There are *sikolo*, *lipoyisa* and *lidokotela*, corresponding to "school," "policeman" and "doctor"; and three swear words which have a wide currency: *demete* (damn it), *demelayisi* (damn your eyes) and *blatifulu* (bloody fool). We may judge what Mr. Marwick himself thinks of such "enrichment" by turning to the pages where he gives the names for the nineteen divisions of the day, with their poetic significance, the thirteen names for months, the many stages of a child's growth (amongst them the *ukulalatela*, when the four months' child, decked out in white beads on wrists, ankles and waist, is carried out to the cattle kraal to be introduced to the moon), and the eight stages of age differentiation, the last being that of the very old, who are called *umhlaba* (earth) or *lidloti* (spirit).

> It is considered to be lucky to visit old people and to touch their foreheads with one's own. For instance it might be engineered that when such a person was leaving a hut a visitor would enter, in the hope of their heads meeting. In this way good fortune would be communicated to the visitor from the old person. . . . They are so near to becoming spirits *de facto*, that association with them seems to be paving the way to good relations between the living and the dead.

As with a similar practice of our own, the efficacy of this visit is regarded as being in proportion to the accumulated wealth of the aged spirit.

It is curious that ethnologists so seldom relate primitive practices with our own. For instance the doctoring of a new house as a ritual protection against sorcery, which Dr. Schapera mentions as having survived conversion, is exactly of the nature of our housewarming; so too *bogadi*, the cattle gift by which the bridegroom "buys" his bride, is a close equivalent to our marriage settlement. The ramifications of *bogadi* in relation to divorce and possession of the child is one of the most interesting parts of Dr. Schapera's book;

but one wonders at his surprise at the open importance attached by the Kgatla to the sexual aspect of marriage. His general statements about it might equally apply to European peasants, though certainly none would be capable of writing the beautiful love-letter quoted on p. 46, which I will leave in the comparative secrecy of Dr. Schapera's pages, in deference to the writer's wish that it should be hidden or destroyed. The issue which these books raise in varying degrees is surely one of supreme importance, for it involves the whole question of colonial empire. Miss Hilda Beemer, whose monograph on the old military organisation of Swaziland is summarised by Mr. Marwick, comes to the conclusion that "the European is bringing about an aimless and disharmonious proletariat with no effective link with their traditional leaders, no appreciation of their own cultural heritage and no equality in western culture." Beside this we will put the evidence of a settler, which is said to be representative. "I feel with the deepest conviction that if the native problem is to be solved, the solution will only be found when the Administration is strong enough to cut itself free from all the trammels of tribal precedent, to ignore the existence of traditions interesting rather than useful, of laws as incongruous and unsuitable in juxtaposition with twentieth century civilisation as the feudalism of Northern England, and customs as moss-grown as the memories of the Hebrew patriarchs. I consider that the perpetuation of the laws and customs of the natives, even in a modified form, is fatal to any comprehensive view of the problem." With whom will the last word be—with settler? with administrator? or with some African Destiny undreamed of by either?

BERYL DE ZOETE

CHINESE OMNIBUS

Into China. By EILEEN BIGLAND. *Collins.* 18*s.*

Journey into China. By VIOLET CRESSY-MARKS. *Hodder and Stoughton.* 21*s.*

Island Years. By F. FRASER DARLING. *Bell.* 12*s.*

Donkey Serenade. By GEORGE SAVA. *Faber.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

The most efficient travel-book imaginable is liable to appear at a disadvantage, no matter how much care its author may have given to a study of the various social, political, historical, economic, religious and aesthetic aspects of the country of his choice, when it is compared with a book on a similar theme, a work of lesser authority, but which sets out to discover and record what so few competent travellers do, an imponderable human element. It is in the apprehension of that unknown human quantity that the authoress of *Into China* excels; and for this book there can be nothing but praise. It is an account of the indomitable Mrs. Bigland's journey along the Burma Road (she was the first European to accomplish this) from Lashio to Kunming in a ramshackle bus, accompanied by a convoy of Chinese ammunition-trucks. Travelling light, with little special knowledge or preconceptions about the country and with less luggage, armed with nothing but her sense of humour and her intuitive sympathy with China, her travels were as much a quest to discover the secret sources of Chinese serenity and spiritual durability as anything else. But any fears that the reader may have that he is about to be launched into a speculative sentimental journey of the spirit are speedily dispelled; *Into China* is all excitement, fantasy and terror. One would expect so adventurous a nature to attract to itself adventure, and adventures, grim, bizarre, horrible or comic, are her constant companions; and as the bus lumbers along on its extraordinary Odyssey

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never for one moment does one question their absolute authenticity. The peculiar quality of her book is the ease and immediacy and modesty with which it communicates experience; and this is partly due to the frankness and vitality of her writing, but more still to the deliberately chosen closeness of her contact with her travelling-companions and to her uncommon awareness of the underlying links that bind common humanity together. She joyously outrages all the Chinese conceptions of the European woman; "Bigland," they call her, *tcut court*, but though perplexed, they can no more resist her than can the reader. Setting foot for the first time in Lashio she experiences a sort of "home-coming"; her journey completed "altered her whole concept of living." Doubts only attack her seriously when she reaches Chungking, the last stage of her travels; but here, amid scenes of unspeakable horror, the act of reconciliation between an age-old philosophical system, an anatomy of tranquillity, and the grim reality of daily wartime existence becomes too much even for her sturdy spirit. It is not till she escapes from this nightmare into Burma that the conflicting patterns of the mosaic start to take coherent form. She has no belief in the possibility of Chinese unity, a great admiration for the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek and a wholehearted contempt for the New Life movement; but looking forward with faith regained (which draws its strength in some measure from the beauty which has so stirred her on her road) she proclaims her faith in China's ultimate destiny, her belief in a race whose immediate reward is only "a handful of rice and endless toil." A moving and remarkable book.

Mrs. Cressy-Marks, an experienced explorer, journeys in a different spirit. These two ladies remind one faintly in their respective approach of that old Landseer favourite, *Dignity and Impudence*. Mrs. Cressy-Marks knows China well and what she is talking about, and, standing no nonsense, journeys in it with a cool, intelligent competence. None of Mrs. Bigland's slapdash methods for her. Her interests are wider and also more narrow, but there is an impersonality about her attitude which lends a certain air of remoteness to her absorbing book. Perhaps imagination burdens her less, and though her observation is detailed and scrupulous the scene only comes to life at intervals. The chapters dealing with the Red Army are of great interest, but one wishes that the author had reported her five-hours conversation with Mao Tse-tung, the Red General, at greater length; it may have improved her knowledge of Chinese Communism considerably, but the reader is left a trifle mystified, though reassured by its unorthodox nature. These sections and those dealing with the final stages of her journey to Lake Koko Nor form the best part of her book, an excellent one, especially for those readers with little knowledge of the country, who will find her thoroughness invaluable.

The Bulgarian travels of George Sava are as lively as one would expect of this writer, even if at times his account of them is weighed down by a rather old-fashioned literariness. He takes with him as his cicerone a disreputable old troubadour whom he calls Long John Vasil; a good deal of space is devoted to building up the character of this elderly card, but he never really quite comes off in terms of "cardishness," perversely remaining instead an old Balkan bore. We are shown the inflexibility of Bulgaria, historical and literary vignettes, its apparently unchanging face, and Mr. Sava gives us many snatches of its folk-songs; but these, alas! have been ruthlessly forced into a rhymed metre which imposes on them a distressing and doubtless unjust banality.

Island Years is an enthralling and a profoundly civilised book, and both as a naturalist and as a writer Dr. Darling is in the class of men like Hudson and Jeffries. We are taken into the wild lonely islands of Eilean a' Chleirich and North Rona, where the eternal rhythms of life and the seasons enable us to see our distraught world in the strangest of perspectives. Dr. Darling is an impeccable observer of wild life and a shrewd one of "civilised" man. He has discovered in places nearly as remote as China sources of harmony and serenity comparable to those of Mrs. Bigland's quest. As Renoir remarked of Gauguin: "Why go all the way to Tahiti, when one can paint so well in Batignolles?" The answer, of course, is that we should be thankful for all experience so movingly and lovingly recorded.

ANTHONY BUTTS

NEO-BOSWELL

A Buried Life. By PERCY WITHERS. *Cape.* 5s.

Mr. Withers first met A. E. Housman during the last war, and his book is an account of his difficult attempts to cultivate the poet's friendship. The difficulty resided primarily in Housman's frequent refusal to play the conversational game; there were a few subjects, it was true, which were certain winners, illness, malicious gossip or personal troubles of any kind. But Mr. Withers aimed higher than that, and consequently a visit from Housman remained, almost up to the end, a terrifying although none the less welcome experience. Rummaging in his conversational locker the host would produce subject after subject, ranging from Georgian poetry through humanitarianism to metaphysics, but whatever he tried the guest remained obdurately unresponsive. The conversation became a monologue. Housman sat staring morosely at the fire: while Mrs. Withers—whose "woman's swift and searching intuition had ventured the explanation 'that man has had a tragic love affair'"—continued to click thimble against needle in the background.

Mr. Withers was not alone in finding this difficulty; yet one suspects that he created a further difficulty for himself. For the Housman who had written six of his *Shropshire Lad* poems without having set foot in Shropshire, was not perhaps so deep in the Georgian tradition as Mr. Withers persistently believed. Mr. Withers took him sightseeing to country churches—surely a Georgian poet would be fascinated by country churches. But as often as not Housman walked round them blankly without so much as a comment. Mr. Withers produced for him a local labourer—"surely a poet who had sung so passionately . . . ?" but, no, the rustic was not, it seemed, Housman's type. In his black moods nothing would content him, neither flowers nor porches nor limited editions nor even dogs. Who ever heard of a Georgian poet *kicking* a dog? Yet that is what Housman actually did.

Not that Mr. Withers's reverence for his subject allows him to use so direct a word as kick; instead he writes:

> . . . one of the dogs crossing his path, he would lunge out with a foot, and appeared to derive satisfaction if the mean assault were effectual. These mornings were the most difficult.

Such obliqueness produces an account less interesting, because less personal, than one feels it might have been. The central problem of the poet's personality easily resists this delicacy of approach. One even gets the impression that

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perhaps the so assiduously courted victim may have been, a good proportion of the time, laughing at his Boswell. Even while his vanity was touched by the assiduity of the attention paid him—for Housman was, it is pleasant to note, thoroughly vain about his poetry and his position—could he have resisted occasionally shocking or provoking the companion who so persistently tried to draw him out?

But since he was nothing if not assiduous, Mr. Withers eventually succeeded in establishing a very fair degree of intimacy with his subject and a number of sidelights are thrown on idiosyncrasies, sufficiently interesting to make this book worth writing and reading. Housman's judgments of his contemporaries, for instance, as wilful as contemporary judgments frequently are; his dissatisfaction with his famous lecture on poetry—"I would rather forget it . . . I don't wish it to be associated with me"; his avowed dislike of women; the sad and painful circumstances of his last illness; and a number of other points of much the same kind which, if they solve no problem, will provide an interesting footnote or two for a full-length biography. T. C. WORSLEY

MR. ELIOT'S NEW POEM

East Coker. By T. S. ELIOT. *Faber and Faber.* 1s.

It is five years since the publication of Mr. Eliot's last poem—a period occupied by criticism, two plays and a volume of light verse—but *East Coker* takes us back to *Burnt Norton*, in something more than title, as though scarcely a day had passed. Or rather, since Mr. Eliot is not a writer who repeats himself, it would be better to say that we resume from the earlier point. There is a similar cluster of experience: problems of time and eternity clutched at from the sliding second; the return to country scenes in childhood—a moment is held and then let go with a gesture of resignation; permanence sought in solitude and in art hung like a Chinese vase in time; the desire to escape from a twilit consciousness into bright daylight or darkness; the struggle to fix ever-shifting experiences with words which also break and slip. No need to remark, at this time of day, that the expression, the amalgamation of such attitudes is sharp and poignant, as final as Mr. Eliot can make it; or that the poem carries an authority which marks the work of no other living poet except Claudel. This authority has been compared more than once to that of Arnold, but it seems to me even more powerful and exclusive. We do not approach a new poem by Mr. Eliot as single-mindedly as, for example, we used to open the *London Mercury* to discover a new poem of Yeats. Whether Yeats or Eliot is the "better" poet is beside the point. We expect, and find, a criticism both of literature and life. As we read, the hint of passages in Milton and Spenser carry the mind back to criticism he has written in the past; the nature of writing itself is put to the test:

So here I am, in the middle way, having had twenty years—
Twenty years largely wasted, the years of *l'entre deux guerres*—
Trying to learn to use words, and every attempt
Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure.
Because one has only learnt to get the better of words
For the thing one no longer has to say, or the way in which
One is no longer disposed to say it . . . .
. . . And what there is to conquer
By strength and submission, has already been discovered
Once or twice, or several times, by men whom one cannot hope
To emulate—but there is no competition—
There is only the fight to recover what has been lost

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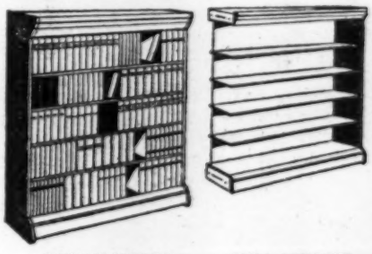

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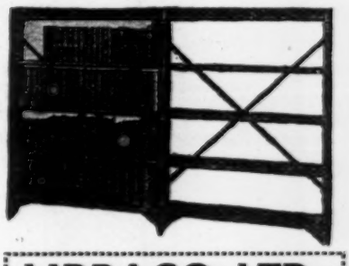

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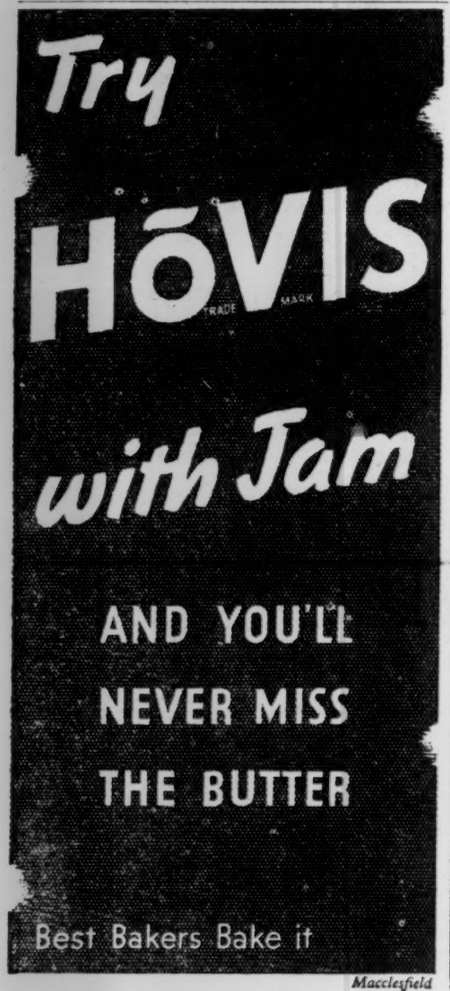

And found and lost again and again; and now under conditions
That seem unpropitious.

Here, it seems to me, is an integrity as inflexible and moving as Baudelaire's, involving however a confession of failure which no poet of earlier date has dared venture; the mask of eloquence—the only questionable part of Baudelaire's achievement—has been dropped altogether, with masterly effect. If one says that Mr. Eliot has set an example to modern poets, it is in this sense of self-discipline and sacrifice and not of course with the meaning that anyone should follow or attempt to follow his manner of writing.

There are many threads in Mr. Eliot's poetry. The mingled nostalgia and caricature of the Prufrock period have vanished never perhaps to reappear; the roots of his later poetry, *East Coker* and *Burnt Norton*, are to be found in *The Hollow Men*. There the lyric, the sardonic jingle, the austere response, were set nakedly side by side; the successes—

Eyes I dare not meet in dreams,
In death's dream kingdom,
These do not appear:
There, the eyes are
Sunlight on a broken column, etc.

—were offset by passages in which fragments from different worlds merely clashed and grated. Since then Mr. Eliot has marshalled his material more harmoniously, and as a whole *East Coker* is a more satisfactory poem than *The Hollow Men*, though it contains no passage to equal the lines quoted above. The greater homogeneity is due chiefly of course to religious contemplation which has smoothed many corners. Pessimistic though Mr. Eliot is even in his acceptances, there is a difference of tone between the following lines and the bleak intrusions of Jehovah in *The Hollow Men*:

I said to my soul, be still, and let the dark come upon you
Which shall be a darkness of God. As, in a theatre,
The lights are extinguished, for the scene to be changed
With a hollow rumble of wings, with a movement of darkness on darkness,
And we know that the hills and the trees, the distant panorama,
And the bold imposing facade are all being rolled away—
Or as, when an underground train in the tube stops too long between stations
And the conversation rises and slowly fades into silence,
And you see behind every face the emptiness deepen
Leaving only the growing terror of nothing to think about. . . .
I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; there is yet faith,
But the faith and the hope are all in the waiting.

In another section of the poem, a similar stoicism leads to one of those catalogues of theological paradox—"what you do not know is the only thing you know, And what you own is what you do not own"—from which Mr. Eliot derives consolation but which are rather blankly depressing to the reader. His thought seems, at such times, to run into a verbal palindrome from which there is escape. Having abjured ecstacy, he yet allows himself to fall into a neutral trance; the bare words do not carry all the weight and meaning which they are meant to carry; and here, I think, one can put one's finger on his main weakness. Everyone who has read Mr. Eliot with some enthusiasm and care must have discovered for himself that in almost everything he writes there are dumb notes; notes dumb, I mean, to us, not to Mr. Eliot, for they appear at important junctures and are repeated. Certain passages are inoperative: such, I believe, are many of his statements of faith, the affectation of disjointedness, the use of words like "Shantih" at the end of the end of *The Waste Land*, where obviously more intensity went to putting down the word that comes off the page.

Again his use of quotation, by which he so often imparts a nostalgic flavour to his verse, has curious lapses. In *East Coker* there are examples of both success and failure. The section beginning

O dark, dark, dark. They all go into the dark,
The vacant interstellar spaces, the vacant into the vacant;
The captains, merchant bankers, eminent men of letters. . . .

makes excellent use of a well-known passage in *Samson* ("Dark, dark, dark! The moon . . . hid in her vacant interlunar cave"). But how do the last lines of the following passage, delightful in its scene, strike the reader?

In that open field,
If you do not come too close, if you do not come too close,
On a summer midnight, you can hear the music
Of the weak pipe and the little drum,
And see them dancing around the bonfire,
The association of man and woman
In daunsinge, signifying matrimonie—
A dignified and commodious sacrament,
Two and two, necessary conjunction,
Holding eche other by the hand or the arm
Whiche betokeneth concorde.

There the Elizabethan spelling imparts no flavour save perhaps one of pedantry; its only effect is to make us think, "Well, I suppose Eliot, when he wrote that, was thinking of passages in Spenser's Epithalamion." Yet obviously to Eliot the whiff of the antique has an immediate, an emotional effect, like the reminiscences of Haydn in Prokofieff's Classical Symphony. This is a purely literary failure and the more odd because of all poets Eliot is in certain directions the most precise in his effects. The drawbacks I have mentioned will not come as any surprise to Mr. Eliot's admirers.

Taken as a whole, though, *East Coker* is one of its author's best and most mature poems. Who else now writing in English could have packed into 214 lines so many disparate things? And despite blemishes and minor lapses, the effect is homogeneous. Perhaps I am wrong in applying the word stoical to consolations which for Mr. Eliot may have a theological reference, but *East Coker* seems to me the sombre and moving utterance of a man looking round him as he grows old.

Sois sage, O ma Douleur, et tiens-toi plus tranquille.
Tu réclamais le soir; il descend; le voici.

G. W. STONIER

NEW NOVELS

West to North. By COMPTON MACKENZIE. *Chatto and Windus.* 9s. 6d.

The Room Within. By RICHARD CHURCH. *Dent.* 9s.

Hamlet Had An Uncle. By BRANCH CABELL. *Bodley Head.* 7s. 6d.

The Camelion's Dish. By ROLAND PERTWEE. *Peter Davies.* 8s. 6d.

Mr. Lucton's Freedom. By FRANCIS BRETT YOUNG. *Heinemann.* 9s. 6d.

West to North is the second volume of *The West Wind of Love*, the third part of Mr. Mackenzie's four-cornered epic of post-war Europe; and takes the Ogilvie's story up to Mussolini's Ride to Rome and Mustapha Kemel's march into Smyrna. For most novels such a method of dating the action would be a trifle pedantic, but in Mr. Mackenzie's tetralogy the political events overshadow the personal adventures, and the movement of history is the theme of the book and not merely a period background. Ogilvie and his circle indeed play almost the part of Henty's boy heroes, and are as lucky as American reporters in being in at spectacular deaths. One or more of the characters see the bloody climax of the Irish troubles, have a backstage view of the rise of Italian

Fascism, watch the Turkish armies reach the Aegean, and take part in a trial for treason. The events they do not experience preoccupy their conversations, and should *The Four Winds of Love* ever become a classic in more than the reviewing sense of the word, it will require, to be comprehensible in future centuries, more annotations than Rabelais. In most novelists—Dos Passos is an obvious instance—continual interruption of the narrative by a news-reel running commentary on political happenings is wearisome at the very least; but the leading articles Mr. Mackenzie repeatedly puts in the mouths of his leading personages are felt with such sincerity and expressed with so much spirit that they impart to otherwise colourless events in the lives of very ordinary people some of the excitement of history. Mr. Mackenzie is a most accomplished writer. His style is polished and lucid, and he possesses the capacity, shared by surprisingly few British novelists, of describing both action and introspection with equally lively facility. The final repute of these books, however, will probably depend upon their value as social studies rather than their merits as fiction. Whether their picture of the turbulent, reckless, experimental Europe that succeeded the last war has more than a temporary value, it is yet too early to judge.

Mr. Church, like Mr. Mackenzie, is a historian of the social moods of the last war and its aftermath; and *The Room Within* is in most respects a successor to *The Porch* and *The Stronghold*. Like them it introduces the Quickshotts, the Cromwells, the Brennans and (in spirit) the Immortal Mouncer; like them it has a Civil Service background and explores the subtle emotional-intellectual relationships of abnormally talented and sensitive people. The present book, with its eccentric Civil Servants and surprising glimpses behind the wholesale herb business, is slighter than its predecessors, but shows an equally polished wit and an equal perception for the mannered inarticulacies of the bashful over-educated. The theme—the gradual awakening of an elderly connoisseur's lovely young ward, and her contrasted relations with a rising business man and an ascetic young official—is one to employ its author's talent for delicate and sympathetic analysis. At his best Mr. Church has the mastery of phrase one would expect from a poet, and it is the greatest pity that he should occasionally slip into sentimental cliché. Such phrases as "the question froze his blood," remarks about knives turning in hearts, and chapter headings such as "Twixt Cup and Lip" are shocking in a writer of his quality, and may for the susceptible reader tarnish the effect of the finest passage. *The Room Within* is a novel of sensibilities, belonging to the French rather than to the English tradition; and its merits and demerits depend upon slight variations of emphasis. The worst that can be said of it is that it is over-cultivated and occasionally precious; the best, that it is the expression of a highly civilised taste. Mr. Church does, perhaps, belong to the fading school of Georgian writers, and his effortless urbanity may seem, at the present time, more than a little unreal. Yet he is, nevertheless, a writer of style and distinction who must appeal to all those for whom the novel is an art-form as well as a vehicle for narrative.

Americans, possibly because they have no mythological history of their own, or possibly because they (and the Russians) alone are quite convinced of their own superiority to all previous ages, have always delighted in burlesquing the famous past. In its more serious aspects this pastime is disguised as sensational biography or over-vivacious editing; in its lighter vein it has been responsible for dozens of heavy-footed parodies of which *A Yankee at the Court of King Arthur* is perhaps the most famous and regrettable. All of these fantasies depend for their humour upon the slapstick use of anachronism and, generally, upon a coy exploitation of the fortunate fact that the past is allowed to be vulgar. *Hamlet Had An Uncle* is a typical specimen of its kind. Mr. Cabell has made many earlier essays into the curioso-farcico-poetico-historical, but in most of these his imaginativeness and lightness of touch have enabled him to dance on the edge of crudity without tumbling into it. In the present novel, alas, he goes over with a splash, and demonstrates the self-evident truth that fantasy cannot be pot-boiled. *Hamlet Had An Uncle* is the Prince of Denmark without Hamlet, without Shakespeare, without even the vivacity of the grave-diggers. Instead, there are a naughty, cunning, old playboy named Wiglerus, an amorous Pictish queen, and a wise-guy Evil Genius. There is a great deal of fun about Sex, the delicious naughtiness of catching an elderly roué without his clothes on, and the lovable callousness of Viking Princesses who think like society dames and behave like musical-comedy Messalinas. Embedded in it all, like artificial cherries in a sponge-cake trifle, are acutely unsuccessful patches of prose poetry. Mr. Cabell, in short, has provided a memorable specimen of small-town sophistication, and reminded his many admirers that you can't judge the novel by the name upon the jacket.

Mr. Pertwee is known as an indefatigable manufacturer of light entertainment, and it is surprising to find *The Camelion's Dish* a serious study of the conflict between Love and Friendship, bearing most of the marks of an earnest young intellectual's autobiographical first novel. There is the homosexual episode (Come into my dark-room, little boy, insinuated the photographer), the encounters with sacred and profane love, and the emotional misunderstandings with austere, rare-spirited femininity. I do not mean to suggest that the novel is immature. Mr. Pertwee writes with his accustomed technical skill, his observation is witty and acute, and, despite the temptations of his theme, he is never gauche. The weakness of the novel is that its characters are over-simple for its theme and the author tries to do more than his powers permit. Mr. Pertwee has neither the naïvity nor the profundity that his story requires, and is clearly hampered by a critical consciousness of his own limitations. He has presented a popular novel on the scaffolding of a masterpiece; it is like a competent light orchestra attempting to interpret a symphony.

Pragmatically, *Mr. Lucton's Freedom* is the best of the five books here noticed. Its story—a provincial business man's attempt to escape from respectability and wander about the countryside—demands for its telling only a light heart and a gift for description; and its chief character is deliberately simplified into a pleasant, middle-brow, middle-class, middle-aged Mr. Everyman. This sort of thing is just far enough beneath Mr. Brett Young's full powers to let him write at ease without writing down, and should provide, for all but the literary snob and the war neurotic, an excellent afternoon's entertainment. *Footnote:* The blurb, after remarking that "there is the scent of hay and honeysuckle in this book. There is the healthy farm fare washed down with draughts of ale and cider for good cheer," etc., etc., makes a surprising reference to "gin-clear streams." It is not that sort of book at all.

JOHN MAIR

HOLDING OUT

The Neuroses in War. Edited by EMANUEL MILLER. *Macmillan.* 10s. 6d.

Fear and Courage. By EDWARD GLOVER. *Penguin Special*, 6d.

These two books, one of them a detailed clinical study of war-neuroses by a number of different investigators, the other a very "popular" pep-talk on approximately the same

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subject, are to some extent complementary. Whereas the various authors of *The Neuroses in War* deal in case-histories and the use of hypnosis and drugs, Dr. Glover is concerned with the wider aspects of war morale, especially civilian morale. Both books suffer somewhat from having been written before the present wave of air raids, which have probably upset some of the psychological assumptions on which the A.R.P. regulations were founded.

The chief fact that seems to emerge from *The Neuroses in War* is the difficulty of drawing a dividing line between different types of disturbance. Malingering, "shell shock," cerebral concussion and ordinary cowardice shade off into one another. Most of the material is drawn from the war of 1914-18, in which the practice seems to have been to regard every "shell shock" case who had not some definite organic injury as a common-or-garden malingerer. From a military point of view this was probably sound, because of the well-known fact that if "shell shock" is treated as a battle casualty and an adequate excuse for getting out of the front line, it immediately becomes much more common. Consequently doctors in wartime tend to develop a rather ruthless attitude towards psychological disturbances. The case-histories given in *The Neuroses in War*, however, show that the soldier who suddenly develops a paralysis of the right arm may be suffering from something more complex than thinly disguised cowardice. In many cases the paralysis, deafness, or whatever it may be, persists for years after the war is over; in some it does not even appear until the patient is permanently out of danger. Behind it there is often an earlier disturbance having nothing to do with the war. In one case an officer was suddenly taken ill at a dinner given to celebrate his having received a decoration for bravery, and remained an invalid for many years. Finally it was discovered that, at about the same time as he performed his special act of bravery, he had refused to help a wounded man under fire. Behind this was a neurosis of the ordinary Freudian type, which was probably the true origin of his guilt-feeling. Cases of this kind are evidently very common, and they obviously cannot receive proper attention in time of war. The commission which was set up by the War Office in 1922 to enquire into shell shock (extracts are given in an appendix to this book) made the sensible suggestion that many people who are physically healthy are mentally unfit for war and should as far as possible be eliminated beforehand. But this suggestion never seems to have been followed up, except in the Air Force and, in the U.S.A., in the navy. Armies are still recruited on the assumption that all human beings are equally brave or cowardly, which is democratic, no doubt, but leads to a lot of unnecessary suffering and inefficiency.

The authors of *The Neuroses in War* are dealing with the individual and hardly glance at the socio-political side of war. Here Dr. Glover goes beyond them. Starting off with a series of chatty chapters on spy-mania, how to keep your head in an air raid, etc., etc., he finds himself, to his own evident surprise, lapsing into a discussion of war aims and then into a passionate defence of the British case. Undoubtedly he is right to do so. War morale cannot be separated from politics. Mercenary soldiers, like the British regular army, may be superlatively brave, but only because they possess a tradition which serves in place of a war aim. The citizen soldier has to believe in what he is fighting for, or he goes to pieces. The conclusion seems to be that to be militarily strong a State needs either a highly trained army of mercenaries or a reasonably decent social system. Dr. Glover remarks in passing that in the Spanish civil war the rate of "shell shock" was low. This is interesting, and would repay further investigation. It is a fact that during about the first year and a half the Spanish civil war, at any rate on the Government side, was fought almost entirely by people of strong political convictions. It is also a fact that during that period desertion was almost unheard of on the Government side, and very common on Franco's side. A study of the relation between war neuroses and war aims would perhaps be more fruitful than even the most detailed enquiry into the effects of the various drug-groups upon hysterical patients.

GEORGE ORWELL

Under Four Tudors. By EDITH WEIR PERRY *Allen and Unwin.* 12s. 6d.

There was a need for a good life of Matthew Parker. There still is: this one certainly does not fill the bill. After reading it one is inclined to offer the comment that a life of the Elizabethan Archbishop should in the first place not be written by a woman, nor, in the second, by an American; certainly not by an American lady. Nor should this be graced by an introduction by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Matthew Parker was worthy of a study by someone conversant with the Tudor age, with some knowledge of, and aptitude for, history and historical writing.

The standard of this lady's work is about that of the sixth form of a not very sophisticated girls' school. Even so, it is a trifle romantic. One is rewarded occasionally for one's boredom by the sort of gem that occurs in the sixth form girl's examination paper when she goes in for her school certificate: of Henry VIII's marriage to Anne Boleyn, for instance, a squalid but subtle psychological affair, we read: "The King placed the wedding-ring on her pretty finger, and drew her o the throne beside him." Of the dubious ancestry of the Church of England we have the ingenuous comment: "There is a strange notion given wide currency, fostered possibly by ignorance, possibly by antagonistic religious bodies, that 'Henry VIII founded the Church of England.'" (But didn't he?) Matthew Parker married a wife—in that like many hundreds of other clergymen who took the risk of clerical marriage in the uncertain conditions of those times. Here it is written up into a tender romance, approved by the Archbishop of Canterbury. "Four hundred years ago," says this sapient American lady, "young men were easily attracted and attached by the merely pretty, giddy type of girl, which no doubt seems extraordinary to-day." Perhaps this is a joke.

Such books ought not to be written, and if written, ought not to be published, and if published, ought not to be introduced by Archbishops. For the serious consideration is that here is so much paper and ink and time wasted, and a good subject spoiled for someone competent to deal with it.

Week-end Competitions

No. 553

Set by T. C. Worsley

A first prize of two guineas and a second of half a guinea are offered for a triolet on any pre-war pleasure. Competitors may send in as many as they like.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, High Holborn, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, Sept. 20th.

2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.

3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The result of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 551

Set by William Whitebait

We offer a First Prize of two guineas and a Second Prize of half a guinea for the best clerihews on animals. Competitors may send in as many examples as they wish, but one verse will be enough to qualify for a prize.

Report by William Whitebait

Entries were overwhelming. Since every clerihew is good or bad on sight, I won't waste time in comment. Here are the best. Those starred will receive a share of the prizes.

The idea of Europa's Bull
Was a little fanciful.
But Jove
Was a queer cove. ELLEN EVANS

The Leopard
Is peopard
With lots
Of (allegedly) immutable spots
LIONEL S. HARRIS

Take my advice on
Meeting a *Bison*,
Just give a gruff "Hallo"
And pretend you're a *Buffalo*.
LIONEL S. HARRIS

Cheetahs
Bring to mind the other competers
(Why, at a recent undergrad. poll
They black-balled Willy *Tadpole*).
LIONEL S. HARRIS

Weasels
Never suffer from measles;
They can jump, skip, and hop,
And go pop. C. J. KABERRY

The Laughing Hyena
Grows leaner and leaner,
Unlike the Cheshire Cat,
Which laughs and grows fat.
C. J. KABERRY

The Indian Elephant
Is most unhappy when he can't
Immerse his muddy body
In the Irrawaddy. C. J. KABERRY

The Crab
Has never been known to blab,
Though it gives him hell
When anything gets under his shell.
C. J. KABERRY

The dodo
Was suaviter in modo;
And would be alive to-day
Had he been fortiter in re. HALL PALMER

Every creature
Has its redeeming feature.
Thus the Gnu
Is invaluable as a Crossword clue.
HUGH MACKINTOSH

Monkeys get nasty jars
Behind bars
When they see you
Looking through. GERALD SUMMERS

To enamel
The camel
Would be silly,
Like gilding the lily. RICHARD POMFRET

The giraffe
Enjoys a good laugh.
But his sense of humour is crude,
Not to say lewd. P. C. ROSCOE

The tapir
Never reads a paper.
He is not interested in news,
And is practically a recluse. P. C. ROSCOE

The tortoise
Is a kind of walking fortress.
You may if you wish
Address him as "Percy Bysshe."
P. C. ROSCOE

The stag keeps a straight bat;
He's full of *noblesse oblige* and all that.
You may mention to him the *Times*, Landseer, and Tennyson,
But on no account Bradlaugh, THE NEW STATESMAN, or venison. G. DE VAVASOUR*

After all these years, the crow
Still caws "Rimbaud! Rimbaud!"
The vanity of these birds
Is beyond words G. DE VAVASOUR*

About the elephant
I've tried to think of something relevant.
I've tried from morn until dusk,
But find myself unequal to the tusk.
DONALD HUGHES

It's a habit of the llama
To wear only one pyjama
While the gnu
Wears two. J. W. F. HURFORD

The stoat
Should take note
That, while in winter it is ermine,
In the summer it's merely vermin.
W. M. CUNDALL

The kangaroo
Knows a thing or two;
While humans at empty pockets grouch
It pops its troubles in its pouch.
W. M. CUNDALL

The chimpanzee
Is a most embarrassing animal to see,
For he always indulges in sex
When the visitor least expects.
MURIEL SLY

The Scottish stag
Stands on a crag
To be shot by some Saxon
With a name like Jackson.
D. N. DALGLISH

The desire to give socks
To the fugitive fox
Distinguishes the English upper classes
From the masses. D. N. DALGLISH

A llama
Once wed a farmer.
She always bore a heavy load,
And sometimes children, à la mode.
WINSOME

The cuddy
Found life bloody:
He said: "Let us bray
For more hay." ALLAN M. LAING

The skunk
Has always stunk:
Even her best friends don't seem to know
About B.O. ALLAN M. LAING

The ant-eater
(Are you surprised?) is an uncle-beater.
On the other hand, the skunk'll
Beat his aunt and eat his uncle.
G. F. PLANT

The wise dachshund
Joins the Nazionalsozialistischeshündchenbund,
Thinking it better to be Parteimitglied
Than sausage meat. NIGEL CYPRIAN

The camel
Is a most unpleasant mammal:
If you sit on its hump
It goes bumpety-bumpety-bump.
TIMOTHY RAPER

The otter
Is a positive rotter:
It guzzles all the gudgeon,
Which puts the sportsman in high dudgeon.
TIMOTHY RAPER

The elephant grows
A nose like a hose.
No beast is an experter
Squirter. WILLY TADPOLE

Giraffes of either sex
Have elongated necks.
For them O what a blight is
Laryngitis! WILLY TADPOLE

Every jackass
Enjoys a fracas
(Or is it a jackah
That enjoys a fracah?) JOHN PICK

The baboons
In the Cameroons
Are hardly disturbed at all
At being taken over by General de Gaulle.
C. R.

Naturally the alligator
Makes an excellent waiter,
Though it's usual to insert a clause
Forbidding the use of jaws.
CHARLES S. COOK

The Samoyed,
Has a very pretty turn of speed,
But the dachshund
Only manages to get around.
A. STANLEY ROBERTS

Deplorable that rabbits
Have such reproductive habits;
They ought to learn the ropes
From Dr. Marie Stopes. I. C. SAUL

The ichthyosaurus
Was here long before us;
But it died out through drinking
And wishful thinking.
EDGAR HOLT*

The American bison
Has committed acts of vice on
10 Barbary apes, 17 attractive gnus, 1 moose, 1 aardvark, 1 titled lady;
Oh Lord, his past is shady.
P. N. FURRANK*

The street manners of the horse
Are apt to be coarse;
A car
Is more reticent, by far.
STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

The vulture
Has no time for culture
(Am I erring
In thinking the same of Goering?)
STANLEY J. SHARPLESS

The hippopotamus
Was one of the finest Blackbottomers
He started to stomp
In an equatorial swamp.
ALBERT BETTERTON*

The camel
Is a patient mammal
He can go three days without a drink,
A long time, don't you think?
CHARLES S. COOK

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